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# TAKING THE STAGE

*Self Development through Dramatic Art*

*by*

CHARLOTTE CROCKER

ALVIENE SCHOOL OF THE THEATRE, NEW YORK

VICTOR A. FIELDS

COLLEGE OF THE CITY OF NEW YORK

WILL BROOMALL



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## PREFACE

IN A WORLD of steadily increasing competition alert individuals sense a real advantage in complete development of all personal factors of social existence. It has impressed the authors strongly that a *program* of expressive self development and a *handbook* on the techniques of dramatic art may draw strongly upon each other. Hence this book.

The general student needs the expressional growth which an actor's training provides. The apprentice actor is rarely prepared for group play production work; he needs special aid to diagnose his shortcomings and to help correct them. Such aid furnished the young actor at the same time that he absorbs dramatic techniques benefits the actor *individual* as well as the individual *actor*.

It is axiomatic that group instruction succeeds best when it serves the needs of the individual student. Educational methods and materials are most effective when they provide, at each stage of the student's growth, activities for individual development. The present volume presents such a system of training for students of *useful* dramatic art.

Expression of self is the theoretical and functional aim of education. Self expression as an individual goal has interested the world's best minds throughout the ages. But, as yet, our most pronounced educational successes are in the field of manual skills and arts and in the development of the student's intellectual processes. True self expression is achieved when the individual's personality has been brought into direct relationship with his environment.

Dramatic art can help greatly in effecting this adjustment. Effective actor's training develops individual expressiveness in a way that releases tensions, dormant energies and latent abilities while providing corrective training for speech and movement. The study of acting techniques alone will scarcely secure these results for the student. Special training in acting is a means to self development rather than the end itself.

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PART I .

TECHNIQUE OF THE ACTOR



## CHAPTER ONE

### BROADENING THE FRONTIERS OF DRAMATIC ART

"Life is a stage, so learn to play your part." PALLADOS

THIS HANDBOOK is for everyone: those interested in dramatic art or those desiring self development but as yet not knowing why they should be interested in dramatic art and its rich by-products of poise, growth and self control. Although dramatic art is closely related to the theatre, it provides far more than a technique for actors. Properly applied it develops a method of broadening individuality and personality so that one can live in harmony with the world about him. Thus, dramatic art serves a broad and useful purpose for the amateur as well as for the professional.

Three considerations prevailed in the preparation of this handbook: first, to clarify the idea that an actor's training, when properly understood, is essentially a program of self development through expression; second, to provide an intensive training in acting for those who desire to participate in theatrical productions; third, to present a modern interpretation of the art of solo acting with its techniques and materials.

In this book, the manner of study for the layman or amateur and professional actor is basically the same. Proper expression is essential for each person, be he president, errand boy, lawyer, doctor, politician, clerk, salesman, merchant, teacher or minister.

The first five chapters deal with the generalities—purposes, forms and values—of expression which are the ground work of human behavior and which should be absorbed thoroughly. Chapters six to twelve, inclusive, treat the four factors essential to self development: (a) speech, (b) movement, (c) mental training, (d) technique of expression; these aspects should be mastered.

Part II presents the mediums, materials and techniques of rehearsing or preparing solo presentations. This section offers a broad

view; it not only prepares the amateur and professional actor for solo and group entertainment but also prepares all people for the improvement of their potentialities in communication, which, after all, is the basis for better social and business connections.

Part III offers detailed descriptions and charts of American folk speech and many foreign dialects. This section gives a unique presentation of dialect; it is invaluable to the actor and to the study of standard speech.

Finally, the ten monodramas selected can be used as solo presentations and practice material.

### *Developing a Practical Point of View*

One is often confused by the abstract laws and principles that govern a science or art. The student may memorize a certain formula, but he seldom remembers the law contained therein over more than a brief period. Modern educators are aware that the student can learn laws and theories more easily when he observes their application. The best method of learning laws and principles is by *living* them and by clearly visualizing their application to life; for then they form a part of life experience. The study of dramatic art involves the study of living people and the activities and expressions that interplay in their affairs.

### *The Study of Acting Is the Study of Life*

The materials from which the actor has formed the principles of his art have been taken from the everyday life and activities of common people. For thousands of years the actor has studied the individual. The individual now will find it profitable to reverse this process and to study the findings of the actor and it will be helpful if he applies these findings to the pattern of his own everyday life.

The study of dramatic art provides a key to intelligent living. In other words, the person who recognizes and applies the principles that govern man's ability to express himself is really living intelligently. Happiness is largely the result of living in harmony with these principles. The inharmonious condition known as *conflict* in life comes from the violation of these principles which, though intangible, represent success or failure in life.

For example, "All men are created equal," is an observation of basic truth; it implies freedom to grow and expand and develop according to one's needs. When this freedom is denied, the individual suffers. Indeed, every denial of individual freedom may be said to

be a violation of a basic principle. There are countless illustrations of this in life and literature.

George Kelly's play, *Craig's Wife*, illustrates the result of behavior in defiance of natural laws. Mrs. Craig attempts to dominate her entire household—including relatives and husband. She tries in subtle ways to curb everyone's freedom. Her motive springs from a belief that she can best maintain her home and her hold upon her husband by shutting out friends and visitors who might weaken her authority. For a space of years her supremacy is unchallenged. But she has set forces in motion that will destroy her purpose. One by one, the inmates of the Craig home discover what she is practicing upon them, and leave. The curtain descends as she stands among her cherished possessions, left alone and friendless. Although she wanted security, and assurance of her husband's love and loyalty, she challenged the unwritten laws of life when she curbed the individual's right of freedom.

The individual, in developing himself, should try to find and apply the principles which square with the truths of life.

### *What Is Dramatic Art?*

It is the special skill involved in a presentation wherein one or more persons recreate a situation which touches the interest and emotions of assembled spectators. Dramatic art is often understood as referring to the staging, lighting, costuming, stage managing, writing, or acting in connection with such presentations. But in this volume it relates specifically to the art of the actor.

### *Opening New Channels of Expression*

The purpose of everything in the world is to express itself. The word "express" is derived from "ex" meaning out, and "premo," to press, i.e.: "to press out."

All life represents a "pressing out" from within. A planted seed presses forth its inner nature and, in time expresses itself as a full grown plant.

Likewise, the growing individual, be he salesman, clerk or interne, is constantly engaged in a similar process of outwardly expressing his inner qualities of consciousness and understanding.

The desire for self expression indicates the ability to open new channels of communication through which one's inner capacities may find effective utterance.

A practical definition of the actor's art is: skill in *ex-pressing*. Everything that the actor does must be a pressing out from within.

### *Building a Bridge from Within Out*

A study of dramatic art can *lead out* the inherent abilities and resources of the student, but it cannot create powers within the student which are not already there. This explains the great purpose of education. The word education is derived from *e* meaning *out*; and *ducere*, which means *to lead*; hence, *to lead out from within, to draw forth, as something latent*. In a certain sense, the child is potentially the adult, for each child has within him all the potentialities which are brought into full development later in life. The child who fumbles with playing blocks develops manipulative skill and expresses some of the inner urges and desires of the future sculptor, typist or metal worker. The boy who makes vague marks with crayons may be demonstrating early abilities that later may mature into painting, writing, and other manual arts and skills.

The process of *leading out*—an educative responsibility—introduces the individual to activities which develop potential abilities into proved abilities. When a student realizes that it is not the purpose of an education to “cram in,” but to “lead out,” he begins to understand his own position. A new understanding of life is awakened in him.

### *Securing Accomplishment through Technique*

Every individual reveals a pattern of behavior which might be called a *way of doing, a technique*. There is nothing mysterious in technique; it is any given way of doing that the individual finds from experience to be the best method of accomplishment.

A technique is a route marked with signposts furnished from the experience of those who previously made the journey and blazed the trail. Thus, a philosophy of acting is marked by the ideas and practices learned directly from the experiences of other actors. The actor's training is guided by technical signposts, which when recognized make possible the right application of the principles and practices of the art of acting.

### *What Is Self Development?*

Self development is the bringing into full and active use all latent resources, abilities, and powers within the individual. Self development is concerned with correcting bad habits and temperamental

irregularities that restrain or limit the individual's powers of expression. Sometimes this process is referred to as "freeing the individual." Freeing him from what? From all limitations of physical movement and vocal expression, creative thinking, observation, and alertness; from such limitations as emotional repression, drawing speech, shyness, awkwardness in walking, sitting, standing, and all other undesirable mannerisms of behavior and speech.

Self development is only accomplished through constructive thinking. There must be a definite method of self training.

Consider the following careers:

Acting	Law	Business
Medicine	Social Work	Ministry
Lecturing	Selling	Engineering
Teaching	Politics	Radio Announcing

All of these careers require technical or vocational training with a development of the mental resources. In addition, they demand a well rounded cultural background and sincere personality. A relaxed body, activated by a keen mind, provides the individual with an efficient method of expressing his intelligence and skill in any vocation.

### *Self Development Is a Requisite to Acting*

The first stage in a program of self development is the building of character, poise, sensitivity, alertness, and the correct use of all faculties and powers that represent the individual's equipment. Only then can one deal efficiently with the complex, technical problems that arise on the stage. The actor, indeed every person who engages in a business or professional career, should be a thoroughly dependable, responsible, conscientious, and capable person. Insofar as dramatic art deals with it, self development is an activity that builds the body into a coordinated instrument for expressing and outpicturing the activities of the mind. This calls for intensive training and practical work.

### *Ability Grows through Use*

Special training gives one a better working equipment with which to handle the everyday situations of life. It is a law of life that *any function of the human organism grows through use*. Likewise any faculty of the mind that is constantly exercised develops and matures; when it is idle and neglected it becomes dulled and unresponsive.

Any muscle of the body, when exercised in a given way, develops speed and skill; when neglected, this organ or muscle becomes sluggish and weak. Through exercise and practice the individual brings his equipment into full use. Thus it grows and proves adequate for all his needs.

### *Summing Up Essential Values in Dramatic Training*

The *actor's training*, then, furnishes a better understanding of life: properly interpreted it gives one something with which to measure the complex experiences of living. It serves to free the body and make it an effective instrument of the mind.

Not only theory but actual practice is essential to self expression. The various mediums of solo dramatic art offer the best practice materials for such training; through them the individual can control every stage of development.

This handbook, as an educational tool, serves to *lead out* inner desires, interests, and capabilities; the potential resources of the individual's growth. This is accomplished by providing a specific *way of doing*, a tested technique, through which one can arrive at the finest degree of self expression.

Finally, the apprentice actor will find herein the basic equipment and training for all his needs, he will assimilate a philosophy of acting that will provide him with rich material for self expression through dramatic art.

## CHAPTER TWO

### EXPRESSION AND ITS FORMS

"The greatest minds seek the clearest expression." ANONYMOUS

ON THE surface, human beings are complex creatures who erect cities, organize complicated social, political, economic systems, create art, ride in the air and under water by means of inventions, and express individual patterns of behavior. But under these complex activities lies the fact that man is an expression of energy.

The entire world is a manifestation of energy. Science now knows that all substances—land and sea, minerals, vegetables, animals—are composed of energies in atomic forms. In fact, man's power of expression has its source in the intelligent interplay of forms of energy. It is through these manifestations of (1) *intelligence*, (2) *movement*, (3) *form* that man recognizes the presence of life. The average person is more at home with the idea of energy expressed as visible movement. Thus, everyone appreciates that energy manifests itself in such forms as the lapping of water, the force of wind, the swish of a dress, or the head, arm, and leg movements of man. Energy of this type is visible, flexible, fluent, and therefore easier to understand.

Energy is always expressing itself in one aspect or another, and *the fundamental activity of life is to express more and more of itself*. Training of every kind of expression must rest upon this basic truth.

#### *Behavior Should Be a Controlled Activity*

Every form in Nature reveals its individual pattern of behavior. The behavior patterns of a bird involve flying about in search of food, nesting, and sleeping. The behavior of the earth involves a constant turning on its axis.

But the controlled behavior of higher type animals exhibits a greater range of expression because such animals have more highly developed intelligence. Intelligence reveals itself in a state of consciousness; the higher the degree of intelligence, the more advanced is the state of consciousness and the greater is the range of expression.

(Compare the intelligence and range of expression shown by a child and an adult.) These principles of behavior and mental activity are extremely helpful to the actor in analyzing and portraying his characters on the stage, or to the layman playing his part in life.

In studying types of behavior the student's primary consideration is the *cause* of behavior and its many different patterns. Why do people vary in behavior?

In the first place, man is equipped with the power of choice. He can *select* one type of behavior pattern in preference to another. His intelligence guides his selection.

### *The Importance of Mental Training*

In man, intelligence is usually described as mind. Mind is the faculty of intelligence that enables man to absorb energy and differentiate it for his own purpose.

Mind is the general term used for all mental activities that are stimulated through the senses of seeing, hearing, smelling, tasting, touching, balancing, as well as through intuitional and inspirational faculties seldom referred to or about which little is positively known.

Mind is the great distributor of energies. It arranges the effective release of ideas born of the senses and emotions.

Mind has many functions. In breathing, digestion, heart action, glandular activity, muscular tonicity, and all other physiological acts of sustenance and repair it acts subconsciously.

The more effectively the mind maintains control over behavior—spontaneous or deliberate—the more effective is the individual's effort to express himself. For this reason the training of the mind is an important factor to the student of dramatic art.

### *Mind Is the Center of Control*

Everything man thinks or does is manifested in a *form of movement* guided by *mental activity*. All physical movement begins within the mind. Thus, when a man sees a dollar bill lying on the pavement, the stimulus is external, but the impulse to stoop comes from the mind. It is seen, therefore, that action patterns have two aspects: *mental* and *physical*. The former should be trained to control the latter.

### *Considering the Varied Forms of Expression*

Consider a man walking. His movements represent a pattern of *changing form*. Smoke swirling through a chimney is a fluent

aspect of form. Water pouring over a falls is another instance of form-in-movement.

Form can also be considered more or less abstract, as a form of religious belief, or a form of government, or the form displayed by a given football team or a certain sports champion.

It is sometimes difficult for the student to understand any activity except in terms of its form. Therefore, it may be said that training in self expression is largely training in controlling the form of expression—for, when an individual displays skill in any art, science, profession, or trade, he shows the mental control that governs the organized *form* of such activities. The actions of the boxer—jabs, feints, footwork—represent movements organized in most effective patterns. The expert work of the typist who turns out attractively organized letters is another instance of control over form. A musical composition represents the composer's mastery of musical form. A person with good expression always shows control over the forms of expression.

### *Movement and Its Relation to Expression*

Movement is change. Change works within man and within all nature for good or ill; it can be retarded or helped but it cannot be stopped. When change is stimulated, growth may proceed at a rapid pace, but when change is retarded life stagnates.

All movement and form are closely related because energy always works through movement of some type. In expression, such movement is always controlled by mental activity. Mental activity consists of the action and reaction of the senses, the entire emotional system, the will and power of choice along with the ability to think and direct thought. The beginning of all man's activity is internal. Therefore, the student in training himself must first direct his attention to his inner mental powers.

When the mind evinces forms of thought or emotion that are weak and vague, this comes forth in expressions that are hesitant, timid, or ineffective. But a clear-thinking, alert mind expresses itself in strong, positive action.

Movement is never free of cause. The baby in its cradle seems to move its arms and legs in meaningless jerks. But science has discovered that the infant's nervous and muscular systems and bony structure require that these movements take place; they are forms of exercise that lead to growth. Rain seems to fall haphazardly. But

rain results from the operation of certain natural laws. Similarly every act of man can be traced to a cause. Human activity can be stimulated from without—as in the example of the man picking up the dollar bill—but the actual and specific motivation derives from one's awareness, from the action of the mind.

### *Conclusions*

To sum up, energy is life, life is energy; and all life begins within. It is the function of life to express more and more of itself.

The true study of self expression begins with an awareness of man's relation to basic fundamentals of life. Man, like nature, reveals the three basic elements of intelligence, movement, and form.

These considerations are fundamental to an understanding of life. They are indispensable to a rounded understanding of acting. *The study of acting involves so many elements that one makes best progress in it when one has absorbed the truths that square with all its aspects.*

The study of acting is a search in the laboratory of life for the controls that establish quality and vitality in all expression.

The study of acting is a study in universal values which are to be given personal and intimate interpretation and application.

The actor's laboratory is filled with facts governing his art. Facts are tools. Some facts are so important to the actor's growth and training that a knowledge of them is indispensable. The chief purpose of this chapter and the following chapters is to establish an understanding of fundamental facts which underlie the actor's effort to express himself. Some of the questions raised involve important factors of training. For instance, what is the basic nature of expression? What is mind, and what part does it play in developing the actor's expression? What is behavior? What is poise? What are the attributes of man's intelligence, and how can they be mastered and used in dramatic art? Is individuality a concrete thing? What is the relation between the actor's problems of expression and the acts of daily living?

When the student considers such problems as these he is preparing to turn sound principles into tools. Uncertainties will disappear, and he will be intelligently informed regarding his expression. One can repeatedly tell a student how to speak a given line of dialogue, but until his inner intelligence seizes the idea it will be a dead thing. Knowledge is always dead until it is warmed to life by intelligence.

## CHAPTER THREE

### EXPRESSION—RHYTHMIC AND BALANCED

“Only rhythm can assure the unity of human faculties” DALCROZE

RHYTHM IS THE EBB and flow of energy. It is the interplay between action and reaction. Wherever energy is revealed, there is rhythm. Rhythm is self-renewing and self-sustaining; it is retention and release; it is contraction and expansion; it is absorption and radiation; it is involution and evolution.

#### *Rhythm Is Inherent in Movement*

All movement expresses itself in rhythm. Rhythm exists in every living, growing, moving thing; in every form of change. Rhythm is an integral part of energy either “frozen” or fluent. It is inherent in all expression and movement. Rhythm often moves in cycles, as in seasonal growth of plant life and in the recurrence of climatic conditions from year to year. Rhythm may have a noticeable beat as in poetry and music, or it may express itself without unusual emphasis or beat, as in the case of pulsations of electric power.

#### *Man Is a Rhythmical Organism*

The rhythm of life is seen clearly in man. Man breathes rhythmically; his circulatory system is rhythmical; his digestive organs expand and contract in regular, peristaltic movements; his heart-beat is periodic. Since the entire functioning of the human organism is rhythmical it is not surprising to discover that mental activity and its expression are also largely rhythmical.

#### *Man's Mental Processes Are Rhythmical; Polarity of Thought*

Thinking involves expenditure of energy and thinking is most effective when it is rhythmical, when it is carried on with an ebb and flow of energy, or an alternation of periods of application and rest.

Polarity is the existence of opposites; it is contrast. Everyone constantly uses thoughts and words that express polarity; thinking

revolves around terms that polarize or contrast experience—thus, in-and-out, now-and-then, yes-and-no, positive-and-negative, black-and-white, on-and-off, here-and-there, strong-and-weak, good-and-evil, life-and-death, wise-and-foolish, soft-and-hard, rough-and-smooth, high-and-low, give-and-take, hot-and-cold, mental-and-physical, spiritual-and-material. All these polarize or contrast thoughts and experiences.

*To think anything clearly is to know it by contrasting it with opposites.* One who wants to comment on the extreme darkness of a night must, consciously or unconsciously, carry in mind the contrasting idea of a bright day. Only those who have tasted bitter foods can most keenly appreciate something sweet-tasting. Experienced actors say that great comedians are those with a deep sense of tragedy. The individual who longs for quiet does so in the midst of activity and din. He who thinks contentedly of his substantial income contrasts his lot with a state of poverty.

Polarity is the basis of dramatic conflict. The student must learn to express this polarity of thought in its strongest and most convincing terms. Polarity of thought lends vividness to expression and adds interest to one's everyday mental reactions to life.

### *Polarity of Movement*

To every action there is an equal and opposite reaction. The rhythm of activity is an established condition. There can never be a cause without an effect nor an effect without a cause. Human behavior is a series of cause and effect links; each action in life has some cause preceding it which may be internal or external: one may smile, for example, at the antics of a comedian, or at the inward recollection of something humorous.

One of the great delights of drama is that it unfolds cause and effect before the onlooker in a more logical, compact way than is apparent in everyday life. Because an audience can see actions and reactions spread out before it—with obscure causes and effects removed—it can appreciate how and why it is that any given life force acts upon and influences another. Drama serves as an interpreter of life; dramatic training is a school of life in its many phases.

### *Securing Rhythmical Controls through Timing*

Every display of rhythm can be subdivided and measured. Thus, a rising tide is a manifestation of energy; but the high water level

marks the limit of its measurable rise. Likewise, the tolling of a bell marks a measurable release of energy. The regular strokes measure the spaced movements in a definite relation to each other. They are *timed*. An ocean swimmer times the energy of his strokes so that he breasts the waves at just the right moment.

One who understands and practices rhythmical movement, displays what the actor calls "timing." When two street workers crack asphalt paving one man holds the chisel and the other *regularly* pounds at it with his hammer. Only by measuring his blows, by *timing* them, can the one worker feel that he has adequate control to hit the chisel and not his fellow worker's hand.

The right understanding of rhythm calls for development of conscious and unconscious use of timing in the fulfillment of any given task. This sense of timing prevents hasty, slipshod action. Through practice one achieves habitualized coordination, and this permits rhythmical activity to go on unconsciously.

### *Breathing Is a Functional Center of Rhythmical Energy*

Animals invariably breathe simply, fully, and without restraint; they permit the breathing organs to function naturally. This insures a normal and regular state of other bodily functions, for breathing regulates and indirectly controls the action of all the other organs.

Civilized man, in contrast to the animal, constantly impedes simple, natural breathing. This leads to restricted functioning of other organs. Man's breathing must be considered as the prime source of renewal of his physical energies. Compare the breathing equipment with the digestive organs, another great system of energy renewal. Air and food are both essential, yet the average individual is more alert to secure food than to provide an adequate supply of air for himself.

Under ordinary conditions one is quicker to recognize hunger signals than respiratory demands. Little by little the individual adapts himself to smaller rations of oxygen. So subtly does he cut down on his air supply that, usually, he is unaware that he has done so. Want of vitality and alertness or lack of strength and appetite often can be traced to bad breathing habits.

Correct methods of breathing help the actor to avoid tensions, insure organic regularity of action, allow for tranquil sleep, and stimulate the mind to a pitch of sustained alertness.

*Emotional Experience Affects Breathing*

Every individual links a chain of emotional responses to his breathing. In a state of joy and exuberance the body expands, more breath is taken in. But, when one is depressed, worried, or grief-stricken, the body is contracted. It draws in upon itself; breath is constricted and retarded. In moments of tension and fear the body sometimes approaches paralysis; the breath catches and is fitful and gasping.

One's emotional state always relates to breathing rhythms—and hence voice and speech. Those whose normal state is tense do not sufficiently relax the muscles to permit easy breathing. This is similarly true of many who reveal temperamental irregularities which take the form of complexes. It is possible to formulate a natural law from their observations: *sustained emotional conflict results in chronic muscular contraction throughout the body; and these contractions retard natural action of the breathing apparatus.* The actor applies this principle in his analysis of characters.

*Breathing Needs To Be Rhythmical*

For maximum physical benefit it is essential that breathing be rhythmical. Compare oxygen and a chemical agent such as gasoline; both are fuels. Gasoline must be fed to the motor in sufficient quantity to charge the engine's motive power. Breath must be drawn into the body in such volume as permits the human engine to function with full efficiency. Gasoline must be fed to the motor in a regular rhythm to assure continuous action. Oxygen must be fed to the breathing apparatus in regular inhalation to support the life of the body and to maintain action at a point of high efficiency. Only thus is maximum power secured for the mechanical engine; only thus does breathing do its part to maintain regular organic action.

*Speech As a Rhythmical Reaction to Thought*

Speech is an expression of thought. It is, for most people, the readiest and most flexible means of revealing thought. The close bond between thought and speech is obvious. Thought is cause, speech is effect.

For example, one may ask, "Is there a city called Lima in the United States?" The listener *thinks*; then he *reacts* through speech. "Yes, it is in Ohio." Because oral communication is a product of

thought, there must be a measured relationship between mental action and speech. Mental activity always precedes speech.

*Summarizing Rhythmical Values of Expression*

Whenever man participates actively in the life about him he is involved in growth, change, and development. Much of the individual's aims and desires can proceed toward fulfillment only when the irregular and haphazard actions, struggles, and movements of everyday experience have been organized into smooth, orderly activities. This is achieved by developing a balanced, orderly state of mind and an equilibrium of all the forces between the individual's inner life and his environment.

All life involves change, in the form of actions and reactions, causes and effects. The individual or actor should strive to understand these changes; to apply their principles to his own training with a high standard of performance in mind.

He should realize that ideal breathing is rhythmical and is most effective when performed with freedom and regularity.

He should know that ideal speech is rhythmical when it is a balanced and polarized expression of thought.

## CHAPTER FOUR

### OUTPICTURING PERSONALITY AND POISE

“Human improvement is from within outward” FROUDE

EVERY PERSON is a world in himself, with many systems of communication—speech, gesture, facial expression, written language—that permit exchange with other worlds of individuality. But, valuable as these systems are, they can only transmit symbols of the thought or feeling that the sender experiences. In other words, one person can never know *exactly* what another thinks or feels. Speech and movement are only outer symbols, or vehicles, for expressing ideas and emotions. This outer equipment is called *personality*.

Personality is the outpicturing of inner-felt states. The word personality is derived from *persona*, meaning mask. Personality is the mask through which the individual expresses himself.

On the other hand, the so-called *individuality* (individual meaning *indivisible*) is the entire *inner* character with its total mental and physical organization. It is the sum of the influences that form character. These forces compose the racial, hereditary, environmental, and chemical make-up, welded together by the mind's co-ordinated processes of thought and feeling. A final element contributes to the entity of character and individuality: experience in living.

It is through one's *way of doing* that each individuality expresses a personality. And although the *inner* state of consciousness or *individuality* may change but little, the *outer* or *personality* expression may constantly be assuming new forms of activity. Hence, personality is always changing.

#### *The Function of Personality*

Personality operates only during conscious hours. In sleep it is dormant. Personality is a way of expression that marks and molds the body and facial lineaments. Personality is the picture of himself that man presents to the world. It is made up of every

means through which inner life can reveal itself outwardly. The *persona* may be used consciously and deliberately as a means of communication. But it also sometimes reveals inner states unconsciously, and often in spite of the individual's desire to conceal his real thoughts or feelings.

### *Poise and Personality*

Personality is the truest expression of the individual only when it is in a state of poise. Everyone seeks poise but few recognize what it is. The dictionary defines poise as: "the state or quality of being balanced."

Balance, or equilibrium is a natural and universal phenomenon. Water seeks to maintain a balanced level; when a flower ripens and dies it furnishes seed that balances death with potential new life. Through a balanced interplay of forces the whole universe is kept in a state of equilibrium. To the actor, poise is the result of a balanced, three-stage process of absorption, assimilation and expression.

### *Watching Poise Work*

Poise is a *concrete* process and it applies to all living, growing things. In the case of a plant, food is *absorbed* through the plant roots into its cellular structure where it is *digested* (chemicalized), and then *expressed* (radiated) in the natural growth that proceeds upward until the plant is ripe and fully matured. In an individual, an experience is *absorbed* (i.e: mentally, emotionally, or physically, and through circumstances, associations, or thought activity), and is then *assimilated* into the individual's consciousness (through meditation or thought)—where it is properly *expressed* or radiated again in a personalized form.

### *Interrupting Natural Processes Affects Poise*

When the individual suppresses or inhibits any of these three stages—through conscious neglect, ignorance, lack of opportunity, want of technical skill, or other cause—a lack of balance results and the mechanism of expression is out of equilibrium.

For example, an individual may absorb abundantly through his surroundings, experiences and contacts with people by means of radio, books, newspapers, etc. But he may live the life of a recluse, in which expression is meager. Such an individual, when he finally desires to express himself, may be lacking in poise.

Or a person may receive experiences that are varied, colorful, rich in meaning, and he may so quickly transfer them into expressional activities—in the form of idle chatter, gossip, superficial argumentation—that sufficient time for assimilation of experience is not allowed. Such an individual is spoken of as superficial, flighty, a dilettante, immature and pretentious, lacking in poise.

Again the individual may live in an environment which offers only superficial experiences, in which case there is little opportunity for absorption. But the person may think and express a great deal. Nevertheless there is no substance to his thoughts. Having had little chance for rich absorption his expression is poorly nourished. Thus another type of superficiality is bred, resulting in a lack of poise.

The well rounded and poised individual carries on the true functions of his being: absorption (experience), chemicalization (assimilation), and radiation (expression). The result is a state of balance and perfect equilibrium between the inflow and outflow of his energies.

Modern education seeks to explore the individual's equipment to determine his deficiency and to adjust its curriculum so as to supply his greatest needs among the three processes referred to above. That is to say, modern education seeks to enrich the individual's experiences, to improve his powers of observation and thinking, and to develop and strengthen his means of self expression and communication. The training of the actor student fulfills these three aims.

### *Self Control, Poise, and Personality*

A popular definition of poise is: *the ability to accomplish a task with a margin of reserve ability, or energy, left over.* The poised individual tries to make certain that ability is equal to a given task. Such a person refrains from overloading his powers and thus causing confusion; he tries to absorb only as much of a given experience as can easily be assimilated and related to his needs.

*Balance* is the key word in poise, implying two forces: the inner consciousness, and the outer circumstance. When the channels of expression are free and open and the means of expression is adequate, then a perfect equilibrium is established between the *desire* to express and the *ability* to express. The result is a feeling of poise, security, ease. If, however, the desire to express a given idea or state of consciousness is frustrated and obstructed, for want of adequate

*means* or *tools* or *techniques* of expression, the individual finds himself with less poise than ever.

When poise is studied in the laboratory of the actor, it is closely related to self control.

### *A Study in Self Control*

Self control is what the term implies: controlled bringing to the surface of all the inner resources of the self. It is, in a sense, another word for *efficiency* in expression: without self control there is wasteful expression and unrelated movement. Proper control of self involves the true economy of living; it is the distribution of energies into channels of expression so as to avoid waste, misinterpretation, and failure to make one's self understood.

Everyone involved in a speech situation expresses more than the factual content of his conversation. He is expressing a feeling tone, an emotional attitude, a degree of enthusiasm, interest, or satisfaction. These are all part of the content of expression. But a confused, incoherent, or agitated speech is produced by the individual whose state of mind is loosely constructed, disorganized, who is confused, lacking in focus, full of self criticism, doubts, and fears, and who allows himself to express such a state of mind.

Self control begins *within* the individual. A clear thought begets clear utterance. Expression functions in many ways and the actor and those interested in self development take cognizance of them all. The student of acting remembers that self control may be exercised in many ways. However, the mental control takes precedence over the emotional and physical controls at all times.

An individual may be said to have attained perfect self control when he maintains supremacy over his mental processes and never allows his entire being to be overcome by the activity of emotion or the demands of the physical organism. In other words, self control is mental control over all experience and the resources of expression. The emotional and physical equipment are then always properly subordinated to the mind activity which governs them. A good rule for the actor is: *never feel your body; make your body feel you.*

### *Concentration is Essential to Artistic Expression*

It is said that ideas are abstract, yet who has not thought of a coming interview with such intensity that the experience took on reality and the heart began an excited beating? This strong, visual

power of the mind has great significance. When mind can act with such force as to excite the whole physical organism there must be a close bond between thoughts, feelings, and actions.

A strong mind is one which has developed the power of concentration. Concentration means attunement or "at-one-ment." It is the focusing of thought upon a specific subject to the exclusion of all else—a lens that concentrates mental power, just as a lens might concentrate the power of the sun. Strong as the sun is, it will not, unaided, set fire to anything on earth. But, introduce a focused lens between the sun and a combustible object and fire results. Powerful as the mind may be, it cannot activate powerful physical performance when it functions passively; but concentrate the mind on a specific thought or subject to the exclusion of all else and soon one's whole power and equipment will be working to that end.

*The secret of concentration is attunement with the cause or motive which stimulates mind focus.* Thus, the student who shows aptitude for numbers and who studies for a certificate in accountancy finds it easy to concentrate on figures. Because he likes mathematics he is attuned to his motive in studying accountancy. One must become so sympathetic with a given purpose that one's whole being is attuned to that purpose.

Concentration is indispensable to the actor. Most individuals find it difficult to concentrate because thoughts crowd in upon them without rhyme or reason. The best way to dismiss an unwanted thought is to *substitute* another thought for it and to concentrate on the new thought. Merely to fight an unwanted thought will never serve to dislodge it.

A mother, waiting for her son to come home, says, "I'm so worried about John." Thus she keeps a place in her mental pattern for a fear or an undesirable thought. Attention should be turned positively to another subject. If this new subject is *sympathetically* entertained it will take complete possession of the mind with surprising speed; it will consume all one's power of attention and concentration and will automatically dislodge the worrisome thought or feeling.

### *The Great Artistic Power of Imagination*

Imaginative thought becomes a thing of delight because it transcends the channels of regular experience. Through use of imagination the individual breaks the bonds of physical reality. He becomes aware that the seemingly rigid circumstances of life do not represent

a hopeless strait-jacket. Both imagination and humor imply a degree of release from inexorable physical restrictions in life.

Imagination might be said to be mental activity unhampered by conventional or rational forms of expression. Through imagination, the mind finds temporary freedom from rules and restraints. Imagination is challenging in its mystery, yet every child is richly endowed with it.

No personality is at its best, no individuality is complete, no actor can succeed upon the stage, unless the imagination is active. Dramatic art is one of the best means for stimulating its growth, for acting experience stimulates the imagination.

Imagination is not simply a method of escape from a reality which one lacks the courage to face. It forms an essential part of everyday life. Kate, in J. M. Barrie's *The Twelve Pound Look*, reveals what might be called an everyday imagination, that is: imagination applied unspectacularly to the problems of practical living. In this play Sir Harry and his wife are also worthy of study; they seem completely lacking in imagination.

### *Securing Proportion through Spirituality*

Spirituality is man's awareness of his relation to the universe and to life. Thus does the actor sum up this quality of consciousness. At the core of such awareness is the heart of central intelligence—sometimes called man's ego, man's soul, man's sense of innate indestructibility.

What is called the spiritual has a value beyond dispute. Man's whole being takes on dimension when he adds an awareness of his place in the universe. The spiritual helps to create and maintain a sense of proportion.

Plays abound in which a sense of the spiritual adds stature to personality. The Servant in Charles Ram Kennedy's *The Servant in the House* is such a character. So, too, is the central character in William Vaughn Moody's play *The Faith Healer*. The individuality of these men grew in proportion as their spirits attuned themselves to the natural truths of life.

### *The All-Enveloping Nature of Mental Activity*

Although it is convenient to speak of the various activities of man as though they were separate and distinct, the student must never lose sight of the fact that such classifications exist only for study

purposes. Thinking, for example, is not an operation which takes place in a single, specific area of the brain; nor does imagination inhabit a section of its own; nor can any area of the intelligence centers be said to be the only point of origin of any one kind of mental activity.

In the best sense, the entire being may be said to be part of mind, just as mind is part of the entire being. Thus, thought is often highly colored by accompanying emotional response; and emotional feeling may be modified by thought; imagination may be full of feeling; and spirituality may pervade the mental, the emotional, or the imaginative processes. Similarly, a cut foot or a painful sprain may force an awareness of itself that, in turn, affects mental activity.

In short, all the powers of sensation, emotion, and thought find oneness in the actor's mind. Through the mind they all intermingle so that it is impossible to tell where one quality leaves off and another begins. Compare mental activity to an iceberg, which shows less than a third of itself above water level. Man's inner processes reveal just as little of their fullness above the level of consciousness. Most of their content is so deeply submerged that it is impossible to observe their origins. They weld together at some inner point, showing only enough of themselves above the surface of consciousness to indicate their nature.

### *Acting Is a Freeing Process*

Every faculty of the artist must be so developed that it will readily assume vital and rhythmical form in collaboration with the others. The inner processes must form strong concepts and *press out* with vitality. Only then are they definitely outpictured through one's personality. Herein lies the paradox of self development: *The individual must free himself before he can control himself.*

The student of acting must seek, by every legitimate means, to become intimately acquainted with the thought and feeling which form man's total response to experience which, when rightly acquired, brings freedom. There is no more practical way to achieve this understanding and right practice of life than through the study of the actor's art.

### *The Actor's Way of Doing*

The actor intensifies and illuminates human behavior. He studies human nature. He portrays characters before an audience with ab-

solite self confidence and an assurance that guarantees a successful performance. The actor deals with success. He cannot allow for failures; hence his expectations are always as high as his aims—and he aims constantly at perfection. Whether his method of attaining this result is through hard physical effort or pure inspiration the actor's way always leads him into the highest endeavor, with every faculty concentrated on a successful outcome at all times.

The actor's way of doing calls for precision and accuracy at every turn. There is no room for carelessness and slovenly behavior on the stage. And yet the true actor is always graceful and natural, with no trace of stiffness or artificiality in his manner. He cultivates self control, a pleasing voice and a sturdy physique.

The actor's way of doing provides a useful technique for every difficult situation; his training and skill help him to meet and overcome every personal problem; he has an understanding of life that is equal to any need in his daily affairs or in the affairs of the world about him.

The actor's training attunes him to the laws of life; his observation of the working of basic truth is both personal and practical. He learns to do by doing and the measure of his effectiveness is fidelity to truth.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### ART IN THE THEATRE

"Applause is the spur of noble minds, the end and aim of weak ones" C. C. COLTON

PUBLIC OPINION of what constitutes art has changed steadily for thousands of years. Yet always there is present one constant consideration: to fully achieve artistry the individual—actor, painter, sculptor, musician—must "get under the skin" of his audience. In the same manner, the doctor, lawyer or merchant, to be successful, must be convincing to "get under the skin" of the patient, client (and court and jury), and consumer.

A play reviewer commenting on a new actor sometimes says, essentially, "Mr. C—— was convincing as the hotel keeper. But he speaks too fast and sometimes mumbles his words and is wooden in some of his movements. He seems though, to have promise, and experience should make him a valuable actor."

How can this actor reveal such shortcomings and yet be "convincing"? In spite of inexperience he is successful in the most important element of acting; he makes the reviewer feel that the characterization is true; he "gets under the skin" of his audience. An actor's merit is largely measured by this one achievement. The apprentice should learn how this is done.

#### *Creating Audience Empathy*

Aristotle noted that all human beings are equipped with an imitative attitude. Men at a boxing match tend to adopt a pugnacious attitude; men and women who live close to nature tend to show a natural simplicity that is lacking in city people. This tendency to respond to an experience by reflecting it in an attitude is a basic principle of all art—especially dramatic art—and is called empathy. The word comes from the Greek *en*, meaning "in"; and *pathos*, meaning "feeling"; the literal interpretation being: "inner feeling," or "in-feeling." Thus to persuade an audience to respond empathically is to "get under their skins."

Notice the principle at work in poetry. In Gray's *Elegy* the poet has hit upon a remorselessly accented beat as one way of creating an effect. And he presents melancholy images. The result is a successful empathic appeal to the reader; one's tendencies to respond to the lines with an appropriate "inner feeling" is irresistible.

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day,  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea,  
The plowman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

The painting by François Millet, *The Angelus*, wherein the peasants stand in the fields with bowed heads while the church bell rings, touches one's inner feelings. Others will feel an empathic response to Whistler's famous picture that is known as "Mother."

In music an imitative response is quickly stimulated by Gounod's stirring "Soldier's Chorus" from *Faust*. Other familiar instances are Schubert's *Ave Maria* and Saint-Saëns' *Dance Macabre*.

Likewise, the job hunter must persuade the employer to respond, as the painter, musician and actor must reach their audience—through empathy.

### *Empathy in the Theatre*

Not every presentation employed on the stage is successfully organized to create audience empathy. A play may be too intellectual, too emotional, too complex or even too simple to interest beholders. But usually an actor's failure to win approval means that he has not persuaded the spectators to empathize with (feel an inner response to) the character he portrays. Insofar as the actor's impersonative ability is concerned, he succeeds or fails according to his power to persuade an audience to "infeel" or empathize with his characterizations.

### *Actor-Audience Relationship*

A reviewer wrote: "Maurice Evans does not impersonate Hamlet, he *is* Hamlet." Evidently the English actor persuaded the reviewer to empathize so keenly as to feel only the character of the Danish Prince and nothing of Maurice Evans. How does the actor organize such persuasive impersonations? One may be sure that he employs certain immensely valuable art principles. They aid in creating an empathic response in the spectator; they aid in the erection and maintenance of proper "psychic distance" between actor and audience.

"Every work of art," observes Joseph T. Shipley,\* "is set in some sort of picture frame and thus achieves 'psychic distance.' . . . Psychic distance consists in somehow setting the work of art off from other—more personal, more utilitarian—aspects of man's activity."

Psychic distance in dramatic art is to be understood as: the distance that separates the actor from the spectator's soul or sense of being.

The relationship of actor and audience at its best is an intimate one. The actor then, more than entertaining the spectators, is moving them, communicating with their souls. To achieve this result the actor uses general art principles to establish psychic distance: the projection of a characterization so that it creates empathy. To succeed in this the characterization must be a balanced one.

Psychic distance is maintained only while the actor projects with the right degree of strength and plausibility to stir empathic response.

### *Factors that Destroy Psychic Distance*

Anything that destroys psychic distance makes it difficult to move the spectator to empathy. For example, an actor is guilty of bad judgment when he is too realistic—for this makes the audience empathize too strongly. John Dolman, Jr. says that the actor, Edmund Keane, used to chew red madder so that he could drool blood in his death scenes.† This sort of thing wrenches the spectator so deeply that he cannot take aesthetic pleasure from the impersonation—and aesthetic pleasure is the aim of all art. Again, the actor must guard against playing too naturally, for then the spectator is not far enough removed from awareness of the actor's own personality. Thus, screen actors frequently seem too natural, too familiar, in the roles they play and empathic response is difficult because the scenes are broken into by the constant infusion of the actor's own personality.

When the actor has a regard for psychic distance and uses it persuasively, he has no trouble in creating an empathic response in the spectator. The principles of characterization will help him achieve this.

\* *The Quest For Literature*, page 194; R. R. Smith Co., New York, 1931.

† *The Art of Play Production*; Harper & Brothers, New York, 1928. This book also contains an excellent account of empathy and the aesthetic aims of art as they relate to the theatre.

## CHAPTER SIX

### CRAFT OF SPEECH

"The manner of speaking is fully as important as the matter."

LORD CHESTERTON

UNDERSTANDING THE purpose of the theatre, the student should become acquainted with the terms of the speech mechanism.

*Diaphragm.* In breathing or artistic speaking or singing, the diaphragm should function unconsciously. The student should, however, become aware of its action and strengthen its control. The stroke of the diaphragm should serve as the motive force in expelling breath. Its rhythmic action affects the phrasing of speech and the attack of words.

The diaphragm is the chest floor and the abdominal roof; the heart and lungs are above it, the stomach and visceral organs below. Its attachments extend very deeply into the lower spine.

*Intercostal Muscles.* The action of these rib muscles in coordination with the diaphragm is important for breath support during speech. Awareness of their action is the first step toward strengthening their aid in sustaining tone.

*Chest* (thoracic cage). The bony and muscular framework of the upper body containing the lungs, trachea, esophagus and heart. Its capacity and effectiveness are increased by maintaining a high and stationary lift of the upper chest while allowing a rhythmical contraction and expansion of the lower chest. Its balance should be consciously controlled to assure adequate breath supply and full chest resonance.

*Trachea.* The windpipe through which the breath passes between the lungs and the pharynx passage.

*Larynx.* The voice box or cartilaginous enlargement of the upper end of the trachea. It contains the vocal cords. It acts as a vibrator in voice production.

*Vocal Cords* (true) The lower of two bands of elastic muscular tissue which stretch horizontally across the upper part of the larynx. During ordinary breathing these muscles are relaxed and breath passes freely through the opening between them. Breath, to be voiced, must be set in vibration by the adjustment of the vocal chords. No conscious effort should be directed to them.

The false vocal cords are above the true cords. They act protectively in helping to close the larynx during the act of swallowing. They may aid in whispering and also may be instrumental in creating the glottal stroke.

*Glottis*. The aperture between the vocal chords. This passage varies in width during speech.

*Epiglottis*. A cartilaginous flap valve at the base of the tongue and at the upper end of the larynx. Its important function is to help close the laryngeal passage during the swallowing of food. It may function in voice projection and resonance.

*Esophagus*. It has no place in voice production. It is the food passage just behind the laryngeal passage.

*Pharynx*. The upper throat passage behind the mouth. It provides entrance to both the laryngeal and esophagus passages below and to the nasal chambers above it.

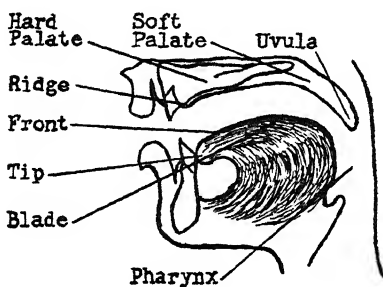
Its muscular, fibrous walls, properly adjusted and tensed, reinforce the resonance of voice directed into the mouth or nasal chambers. When these walls are too relaxed they dampen sound and check resonance. Pharyngeal action, in conjunction with the soft palate and uvula, can produce guttural tones.

*Soft Palate and Uvula*. The fleshy, muscular area adjoining the hard palate and forming the back of the mouth roof. The soft palate and its tip, the uvula, act in controlling the formation of the passages through which voice is directed and through which sounds are emitted. They lower to allow free upward passage for nasal sounds. They lift to allow breath to pass into the mouth for oral sounds. Their action in relation to the pharynx and the tongue is important to the quality of sound produced.

*Nasal Chambers*. The cavity extending from the pharynx up above the mouth roof and through to the nostrils. It acts as a passage

for breath and as an important resonance chamber. This passage provides speech with most of its overtones.

*Mouth.* The cavity which acts as an orifice for uttering oral sounds. Speech sounds are formed within it by the action or placement of the articulate agents. Breath flows into the mouth when the soft palate is lifted and the nasal chamber is closed.



*Hard Palate.* The bony roof of the mouth which extends from the upper teeth ridge to the soft palate. It is important in resonance. Breath is often focused at this area.

*Tongue.* The principal agent for the formation and articulation of sounds. The tongue's ingenious and intricate muscular organization permits amazing flexibility. It may be lengthened or shortened, made thick or thin, wide or narrow, tense or relaxed, concave or convex. Its parts are described as tip, front, blade, back. These act independently or coordinately.

*Lips.* Important agents of articulation and sound production. Their control for speech sounds requires tensing or relaxing, rounding firmly or loosely, lengthening, protruding or pursing. The upper lip may be held firm but inactive.

*Jaw.* An active agent for controlling size of the mouth passage and for articulation of sound. It initiates a strong sound stroke in several dialects.

*Articulative Agents.* The tongue, lips, palates and jaw.

## ANALYZING SPEECH \*

The actor must analyze speech for three reasons: (a) to overcome speech difficulties, (b) to intensify the idea that speech must be directed to the mind of a listener or audience, (c) to discover ways in which speech can be used to build characterizations.

Discussion of speech values begins with consideration of *diction*—*a collective term embracing the elements of speech utterance*. The elements are: pronunciation, timbre, stress, intonation, duration. When these operate harmoniously vocal expression becomes individualized. The mind is stimulated to reveal thought in vigorous form when it has adequate tools of expression.

These elements of speech combine to establish a speech standard. Speech standards are largely influenced by three factors: (1) the individual's social background, (2) inheritance from parent stock, (3) personal response to life. A standard may reveal culture or lack of it.

*What Makes Speech Individual?*

Each person has his own variation of vowel and consonant formation, use of timbre, stress, intonation, rhythm; and the combination of these form his "diction."

The speech of a well-bred, high-strung person has a certain quality. High-strung people tend to make use of lavish intonation and modulation. The individual speech pattern in this case would be full of rising and falling inflection and sharp changes of pitch.

An overbearing individual tends to speak loudly and establish his speech individuality through that quality. A foreigner who speaks broken English assumes a speech individuality through imperfect pronunciation.

The actor needs to cultivate his "migratory" sense. Every situation and person and object should be of interest to him. Like all artists, he should develop insight into the feelings and thoughts of other people. Only by forgetting self and by reaching out to sense why people differ in their experiences, reactions, thoughts, and vocal utterance can the actor increase his own gamut of expressiveness. Such sympathetic identification (understanding) results in the mastery of the speech patterns of others.

\* For extended study of vowel and consonant formations, the student is referred to Chapter 23 (Basic Equipment for Dialect Mastery) and Chapter 24 (Exercises for Dialect Mastery).

But practice of this kind must begin at home. Certain questions, considered and answered, form a basis for the expansion of one's knowledge of other people and their speech habits. The apprentice actor should answer the following questions for himself:

How has social background shaped your speech standard?

Trace speech tendencies which you seem to have inherited. How do they help or hinder?

How much care do you exercise in utterance?

Does your diction suggest positive or negative things, and just what things does it suggest?

Is your speech too slow, uncertain, slovenly, shrill, monotonous, muffled, harsh, or too rapid for other people to understand?

Do you articulate with precision, with an understanding of how to form vowel sounds and consonants?

What use do you make of throat, tongue, lips, jaw, and resonance chambers?

Has the speech standard of your friends led you into positive or negative practices? How have they affected your speech?

### *The Actor's Concept of Pronunciation*

*Pronunciation is the formation and utterance of vowel and consonant sounds as they occur in connected syllabic or word groupings.*

A thousand people may pass successfully a test of their abilities to pronounce individual vowel and consonant sounds in accordance with a high speech standard. To this extent their pronunciation may be uniform. And yet, when the various sounds of speech are strung into words in connected speech, differences arise. For example, a thousand people may all prove they can pronounce final "r" sound, but not all of them use the final "r" sound in connected speech. The explanation is that in connected speech one sound influences and modifies another. This is called assimilation.

Many things—even posture—affect assimilation. "The slightest abnormality of posture tends to pull . . . extrinsic laryngeal cradle muscles out of alignment and this in turn pulls the entire larynx away from its basic support against the spine. Thus many common faults of voice production result." \*

*Marezeedoats; doezeedoats; kattleedivytoo*

The above represents an illustration of how sounds in relation to each other create astonishing effects. A careful speaker would be at

\* Bender and Kleinfeld, *Principles and Practices of Speech Correction*, p. 140. Pitman, New York, 1938.

pains not to let vowels and consonants merge, whereas the rapid or careless speaker permits too much assimilation. Here is the literal, properly spaced organization of the above sentence:

*Mares eat oats; does eat oats; cattle eat ivy too.*

There are two main causes of improper assimilation. The first is directly due to the individual, the second arises from differences in sectional pronunciations. If sectional differences amount to folk speech and dialect they are dealt with in the dialect section of this book. But certain elements of individual assimilation have a place in the study of character analysis. Consider the following.

"So y' t'ink y' tough!"

The way the sounds are assimilated is mainly responsible for typical "street tough" utterance such as the above. The "street tough" speaks differently from the semi-literate individual. The tough's speech is jerky and generally crude in its assimilative effects. It does not have the usual glide of typical American utterance. Indeed, the tough's speech resembles his personality; it is hasty, uneasy, broken, rough. Some phrases sound rebellious, antagonistic. Few sounds blend with ease and grace.

Note the following sentence.

"You can stay over at Edmund's if you like."

An able actor would speak this line at a moderate rate with controlled effectiveness. The final consonant of "over" would be distinct from the initial vowel sound of "at"; the vowels and consonants of the four final words would be equally distinct.

The actor would sound the full values of the vowels. He would utter the consonants with a sharp, well articulated attack. He would give full and proper values to this speech pattern, producing smooth and rhythmical assimilation. Note the following.

"My dear, you aren't going to ask Ellen over?"

A talkative high-strung woman of rapid speech exhibits some particularly interesting habits in connection with assimilation. The best way to suggest the effect is to present the above sentence as a continuous unit:

"Mydearyouaren'tgowingtoaskellenover?"

Such a speaker rarely pauses for breath and achieves individuality mainly by extravagant use of intonation. Her vowels and consonants lack sharp articulation; they merge into each other rapidly. Note especially how "ask Ellen" becomes "askellen"; and how "Ellen over" merges into "ellenover."

### *Some Important Assimilations of Vowels and Consonants*

The average speaker has no difficulty in pronouncing the vowel sounds heard in "cake-redeem-mine." In many dialects of American speech, however, there is a tendency to introduce the semi-vowel sound "y" between the vowel and the consonant following. Compare the following words which illustrate this: *Stream—streeyam; redeem—reddeyam; real—reeyal; mine—mahyeen or mahyin; line—lahyeen or lahyin; main—mayin; cake—cayik; and—aynd or ayind; man—mayn or mayin.*

Again, the diphthongs of American speech are sounded with attack upon the initial vowel sound of the combination and with only a short, glide value attached to the final sound. Improper assimilation, however, equalizes the diphthong by lengthening the final glide sound. The following illustrates this.

a	a-i or a-e	as in <i>take</i> ,	becomes <i>taek</i>
i	a-e	as in <i>time</i> ,	becomes <i>taem</i>
o	o-o	as in <i>so</i> ,	becomes <i>so-oo</i>
oi	oe	as in <i>boil</i> ,	becomes <i>boel</i>
ow/ou	a-oo	as in <i>out</i> ,	becomes <i>aoot</i>

Introduction of the indefinite vowel sound before or after "r" is another common dialectal occurrence. Note that whether the "r" precedes or follows a vowel sound the extra vowel is heard between "r" and its closest consonant. Thus: *brave, bur-ave; cream, cur-eam; barn, bar-un; girl, gur-ul; bird, bir-ud; harm, har-un.*

Another assimilative difficulty is found in the inverted "r" as pronounced in many midwestern dialects of American speech. This consonant is sounded with a harsh peak of prominence which always has an effect upon the preceding vowel sound. The vowel is broadened or deepened: thus, *hard, corn, earth, sort, world* become *har-rd, cor-rn, ear-th, sor-rt, wor-reld.*

When consonants are particularly troublesome to pronounce they are often slurred or entirely omitted: thus, *get him, get 'im; hold on, hol' on; getting wet, gettin' wet.*

*Securing Individuality through Tone of Voice*

Timbre (*voice quality*) or voice tone is characteristic and individual in the full-throated speech of a gusty tar, the quavering tones of an old woman, the resonant voice of a trial lawyer, the hard carelessness of the department store clerk, the confident piping of an alert youngster, the placid fulness of a matron, the strained artificiality of social types, the rich, caressing voice of a loving woman, the hard, metallic voice of a gunmoll.

The individual student will find he has his own unique timbre—determined by the fibres of the voice box and what is called the mold.

Think of the mouth, nasal chambers and upper throat as a mold, just as a violin box is a mold. Sound pouring through this mold gives individual voice quality. As an experiment, try to produce the voice tone suggestive of quavering age. Tense the throat and permit but little voice to emerge from the throat.

To create richer and more resonant voice quality, lift the chest and permit it to be used as a resonance chamber while saying such round voweled words as: "Rollo rolled a round roll round and round." Permit the diaphragm to pump a proper quantity of breath past the vocal cords.

Timbre varies with mood. Solemnity and dignity have deep voice color. Discouragement flattens the voice, fear makes it shrill, contempt sharpens it, awe increases aspirate tone. These are general observations and the make-up of different temperaments permits no hard and fast rule in the use of timbre. One should listen carefully to his neighbors and observe how mood displays appropriate tone color.

Until a person has studied his own voice and has experimented and found out how a different focus of breath brings voice changes, he cannot fully exploit his vocal timbres. Breath focus is the biggest controllable factor in determining voice color and quality. Practice the exercises on timbre given in the chapter on Exercises For Dialect Mastery.

In speaking aloud, note how the articulative agents—tongue, teeth, jaw, lips—affect sound formation. Does the voice stay in the throat or does it flow freely past the teeth? Unless tone is so projected it will not have ample carrying power. Are the lips and the tongue used with strength? Think of getting into the "color

sounds" of vowels through strong consonant strokes in these words: holy, brave, greet, catch, sight, romp, pill, link.

Experiment with the following sentence:

"Gee, Frankie, you never take me no place."

Try to say the above as it would be uttered by an ingénue or by a "baby-talk" sort of girl. This type speaks with a treble, extremely well projected tone. The back of the tongue is raised and the voice is focused against the hard palate. Here is another type of utterance:

"Oh, I'm just a lucky golfer."

Recreate this sentence as it might be spoken by a diffident, outdoor type. In most self-conscious people the voice is kept in the back of the mouth and there is comparatively little inflection and pitch change. The tone is deprecativ.

These are but two extremes of the endless variety of voice tones which can be reproduced with proper experiment. Listen at the radio and attempt to imitate the tone of some speaker. Experiment with your voice to discover how it may be improved and to discover what its strong points are with relation to tonal production.

### *Using Stress to Heighten Speech Effects*

Stress—*emphasis in utterance*—is an important means of emphasizing logical relation in factual or explicit speech. In emotional utterance stress (or lack of it) reveals the degree of life possessed by the speaker. One who is full of vitality uses a great deal of stress. In impersonating a weak character, stress is conspicuous by its absence, a flat, dead application. A petulant character would employ much intonational stress. A well controlled character achieves emphasis through his handling of vowels, for vowels are the most responsive and effective elements of words.

*Stress is applied through syllables, words, phrases and sentences.*

Secure stress by *force*, that is, through use of volume or loudness; through *pitch*, by means of sudden and contrasting inflections and intonations; through *timbre*, by means of voice coloring; through *rhythm*, by means of pause and duration—that is, the lengthening and shortening of vowel sounds and consonants.

*Stress Is Applied through Hearing*—There are so many ways of securing stress that one must take care not to become bewildered.

One simple fact should be kept in mind: *True stress is controlled through ear-training*. Listen constantly to the speech patterns of others to discover how easily and naturally the various means of obtaining emphasis are used by different individuals. Indeed, each person uses most kinds of stress at one time or another.

*Securing Stress through Volume*—To illustrate the application of stress by means of volume or loudness, the stressed syllables have been capitalized:

“EDgar! will you beGIN?”

Stress through force is applied to the normally accented syllable of the word and especially to the vowel in the stressed syllable. This stress is common to certain types of emotional utterance. Its over-use in casual conversation or in factual speech usually indicates that the speaker is emotionally overwrought or ill at ease and insecure in social situations. Consistent loudness in speech may be a symptom of ill-breeding. But overemphasis is unnecessary and it is the least effective way of communicating ideas.

Entire words, monosyllabic or polysyllabic, are often emphasized through force of utterance.

“I said, take the *brown* book.”

In a case where a particular object or quality of an object is stressed—as in the above—increase of volume is the easiest way to make meaning clear. Stress implies not only a degree of loudness, however; it may also involve a contrasting soft tone. Thus the italicized key word of the following sentence can be uttered with deferential softness.

“Will you *repeat* that, please?”

In this case the subdued volume extends over a word of more than a syllable. Following is a sentence illustrating both increased and decreased volume.

“*I walked along*, thinking of nothing important, *when whom did I meet but Henry!*”

“Thinking of nothing important” is dropped in pitch and volume and is speeded in tempo. This makes the first and last parts interestingly emphatic. Pitch change, decreased volume and increased tempo are often used when one wishes to “throw away” a phrase

and thus secure more attention for other more important parts of a sentence.

“WAIT UNTIL I GIVE PERMISSION.”

Where stress through loudness extends throughout a whole sentence there is a corresponding sacrifice of variety. In dramatic literature employing narration there is no need for disproportionate loudness to gain effect; other methods of obtaining stress achieve emphasis more artistically. In impersonations, however, loudness may be the only means by which one can set the right tone to character—especially in such types as a rowdy street tough, a slattern, a bawling sailor or any generally crude and vulgar character.

*Securing Stress through Timbre*—Where timbre (voice color) is used as a means of stress it is hardly effective in smaller units than words. Thus, one can say caressingly, “of course”; and silkily, “Do you think so?” and throbbingly, “Stop.”

In this sentence one can use voice color fairly to shiver the key word “cold.”

“Heavens, what a *cold* day.”

In the same way, the voice paints with malignant fury or hysterical desperation in the utterance of the following key word.

“I’ll *kill* you!”

Voice tone is most interestingly employed in long sentences which contain more than one thought and a change of mood. Here is a wife speaking, first commanding then caressingly entreating:

“Don’t you dare go to Franklin’s party alone unless you don’t care if I have to sit home here by myself?”

Stress achieved through voice color or quality is always effective and should be used wherever possible.

*Securing Stress through Rhythm*—Say aloud, “be-come.” Note that the first syllable is shortened and that the second is sustained and that this effect of emphasis is achieved without mere loudness. It is a practice in English speech to give greater prominence to one syllable than to another; some vowels are shortened and others are lengthened. Duration (an element of rhythm) implies sustained or abbreviated utterance. Note the following:

“I won’t go with you.”

Many people tend to draw out the vowel of each word in such a sentence as the above. Others utter each vowel with particular crispness. Many students unconsciously go to one of these extremes and are unaware that their speech is limp and characterless or crisp and too authoritative. Such extremes handicap interpretative work. Students who detect such faults in themselves should study dramatic literature which offers practice differing from their usual type of utterance.

Stress through duration of sound involves another difficulty: upon becoming aware of the values of standard speech, some students tend to be over precise in the formation of small words, stressing such weak forms as: *and, but, to, in, so, be, can*. The student usually can correct this fault as soon as it is called to his attention.

In a narrative passage such as this—"He stole up slowly, silently."—stress is secured by drawing out, *sustaining*, the vowel sounds. Much the same type of utterance is involved in direct discourse such as the following.

"I wouldn't try that; it would cost you too much."

In this case the tone is one of warning and the sustained vowels serve to suggest veiled threat.

Again, in innuendo, effective stress is secured by sustained vowels:

"Oh, so you haven't been anywhere this week?"

Another element of rhythm which aids stress is pause. In the first of the following instances, note how the name may be lifted into prominence by a slight pause. In the second, observe how suspense is created.

"Mr. Brown, I'd like you to know—Mr. Smith."

"I'll go if—you'll stay."

*Securing Stress through Intonation*—Pitch change through a syllable is achieved by a gliding inflection. Understanding of an explanation may be shown by a series of pitch changes in the syllable, "O-o-oh." Note that it is nearly always the vowel which is susceptible to such intonational stress.

Intonational stress is illustrated in the form of a glide in monosyllables such as "yes?" "no," "come here." In monosyllables which follow one another and in polysyllables a definite change of pitch

gives emphasis and variety. This is best illustrated through whole phrases and sentences; thus:

"You? Marry my daughter? Ridiculous!"

Incredulity is indicated by the withering, upward inflection of the speaker in, "*You?*" Other glides and changes of pitch occur in the next sentences. Americans and Britishers are noted for the amount of their inflection when emphasizing a meaning, and this is indeed an excellent way of securing variety of stress. But, it must not be carried to an extreme lest it become a fault.

### *Variety through Intonation*

*Intonation is pitch variation in speech.* The first essential here is to realize that every voice produces individualized speech tunes. A criticism often leveled at actors is that they "play themselves." They seem to be dramatizing what would be their own personal reaction if they had the play's circumstances to cope with in real life. This effect is noticed especially when the actor employs his own speech tunes in his interpretations. He either cannot or will not reproduce the intonations which seem to be called for in impersonation of given characters.

One must grasp the speech tunes commonly heard all about him. A most fundamental speech tune is that reproduced by a sulky boy.

"Aw, gee, I do'wanna go."

The first two syllables descend in tonal glides. On "I" the voice tone lifts half an octave and then descends in full and half tones until "go," where it glides upward somewhat.

*Finding the "Home Tone"*—One of the most interesting things about intonation, apart from the established fact that everyone speaks in characteristic tunes, is that the voice has a home tone to which it returns again and again—just as in a melody there is a dominant tone returned to for rest. In speech this may be called characteristic pitch level. Read a sentence or two aloud in a *monotone*. The pitch used most naturally in the monotone is your characteristic pitch.

Go to a piano and sound this pitch tone. Talking extemporaneously, lift the voice up and down the scale. Mentally place the normal high and low limits of the tonal range. The speaking voice will be found to have a considerable range.

Few untrained speakers use all the tones within their speaking gamut. The average person spans but half a dozen tones of the major scale in forming his speech patterns. However, the voice does change key and this helps a great deal to keep speech varied. Americans are one of the most monotonic nationalities of the civilized world. Their speech stays within the range of a half dozen tones above or below their home tone. Remember, however, their voices do change key. What causes the voice to change key?

*Variety Comes through Change of Key*—Change of key is largely a matter of mood. In a depressed state of mind the range is limited and the voice is keyed to a low home tone. In excitement, the opposite is true: the home tone is then high. Introspective people tend to speak in an unvarying key, high or low. Effervescent and extroceptive people shift from key to key.

"There's no future in this job."

Uttered dispiritedly, this remark will be voiced in a low key without much intonation.

"Sally, I'm going abroad for my vacation!"

In the excitement with which a young person would accompany a happy remark of this sort, the voice tone is automatically raised.

"I don't seem to get along very well with him."

Such a statement voiced by an introspective person would undoubtedly be cast in the tonal pattern which that person invariably uses. Unless the person were exalted—as often happens with such people—the tone will be moderate; though it may be accompanied with reasonable intonation.

"Listen, smarty, you're just angry because you can't go to Europe for your vacation. You would like to go, wouldn't you Sally? Oh, I'm so happy!"

Here are statements which, if uttered by a happy, effervescent personality, may easily invade three different keys. Try to reproduce them.

Apart from the intonational range which spreads throughout a sentence, there is the pitch change employed in vowels, syllables, and words.

*Modulating Vowels*—A change of pitch within vowels is called modulation or inflection, "Oh" receives all kinds of modulations, depending upon the speaker's reaction. The tone varies from high to low or from low to high. It will curve downward when the speaker is responding positively—as when he has been told he will have to work an hour over-time. It will curve upward when he is told that he is next in line for a desirable promotion.

Americans make considerable use of pitch change within words. It is their way of achieving variety—instead of employing full tonal range. The British use a great deal of inflection, too; but, they also tend to use many tones in their speech gamut.

*"No, Harry; playing with such rude boys is harmful and debasing. Dear, dear! such rude expressions!"*

An American capable of such utterances will almost certainly use a great deal of inflection, particularly in the italicized words.

To appreciate the value of intonation in achieving animation and variety, study intonational patterns heard over the radio. Study first the obvious type-characters—the nurse, the genial Irish policeman, the stern father, the sweet mother, the wicked brother, the flighty and wayward sister, and the crooked politician. Their intonations are easy to mimic and they serve to ground the ear in characteristic tonal differences of speech tunes. Thus, there is the clergyman's unctiousness, the mother's sweet reassuring and falling intonations, the nurse's submissive response to the doctor, and the doctor's uninflected response to her; there is the uncompromising monotone of the stern father, the insinuating, sly tone of the brother, the aimless rise and fall in the voice of the flighty sister.

Listen to programs which present established stars. Learn to distinguish between those who constantly "play themselves" and those who have served a full actor's apprenticeship and, therefore, never spoil their performance by reproducing worn and tiresome intonation patterns.

### *Duration in Speech*

Duration is the term used to describe the time values or pace of speech. The relative pace of different speakers varies from slow to fast. Sentence tempo, which does much to stamp the diction of the speaker, is the product of the time values contained in pauses.

It is also the result of the duration values of words and phrases making up connected speech.

If the student's words are customarily clipped and shortened, his speech pace is likely to be fast. If he draws, or otherwise lengthens sounds, his tempo is much slower.

Phrases are subject to the same characteristic treatment by the speaker as individual words. That is, the words which compose the phrases are either sustained or abbreviated.

*Pause in Speech*—Length of pause is another aspect of duration. Length of pause establishes the relative values of silent intervals. Such intervals help to create typical speech pace. When one is grappling with important ideas, pauses become longer. If the speaker is gripped by strong emotion, the pauses most likely will be marked. On the other hand, where speech incentive is slight, and where ideas are superficial, there is not much need of pause and its presence is often hardly noticeable.

Everyone has a characteristic pace of speech. This tempo is developed in accordance with the individual's temperament and make-up. Those of quick movement and thought tend to express themselves in brisk, staccato speech and movement. Those of deliberate and profound thought, or those of slow wit, are likely to sustain their vowel sounds and words. Speech changes its rhythm and tempo according to the individual's personality and state of mind.

## CHAPTER SEVEN

### CREATIVE SPEECH

"Attack is the reaction; I never think I have hit hard unless it rebounds" SAM. JOHNSON

CREATIVE SPEECH *establishes in the mind of the listener such experiences as the speaker aims to convey.*

The aim of speech training is to form an effective bridge from the world of the speaker to the world of the listener. The act of talking implies an audience. The hearer is the focal point of the speaker. Speech must convey what the speaker knows or thinks or feels to the listener.

The bond between speaker and auditor is of inestimable value. One naturally depends upon the other. He who holds the floor must *give* with such expansiveness that his word pictures recreate images in the mind of the listener. When the speaker plays the role of auditor it is his turn to give responsive attention and *take* from the mind of the new speaker. A good speaker needs to become a good listener. Too many people make no effort to grasp what the speaker says. One type of listener is so impatient to make a contribution of his own to the conversation that he does not listen to the speaker but concentrates upon what *he* will say next. Again, an auditor may look alert and affable, but make no honest effort to understand what is offered to him.

A poor listener does not necessarily imply an ineffective speaker, nor is a poor speaker necessarily unable to listen well, yet these shortcomings often go together. The non-creative speaker is so intent on explaining what *he* thinks and what *he* knows and what *he* feels that he fails to realize that *speech is a two-way affair.*

#### *Speech as a Welling Out from Within*

The creative speaker uses self control to marshal thought and feeling in the *form* most appealing to the mind of the listener. In addressing a passive auditor he speaks with such vigorous animation

and in turn he listens with such flattering concentration that passive minds are shaken out of indifference and finally try to grasp the speaker's idea. When talking to impatient listeners the creative speaker reveals ideas of such well *formed* intensity and rhythmical emphasis that such listeners pay close attention to what is being said.

The able interpreter uses words to define actual experience. For him words feel and point out and act and describe and taste and hear and speak. Such a word, for example, as "green" has tingling reality. The visual power of the mind summons up the image of, perhaps, the pastel green of a chiffon dress, the olive green of a uniform, the crisp green of a freshly painted house exterior. When he speaks the line:

"He maketh me to lie down in *green* pastures . . ." the spoken word fairly reproduces the color.

When speech *expresses* this kind of mind action it is a true welling forth from within. Concentrate upon the word "sour." Recall the taste of vinegar or a sour pickle until the muscles of the lips are affected by the strength of the image and then say the word aloud. The utterance will be released with a *ping* expressive of sourness.

Repeat this experiment with "hard." To revitalize its imagery attune the mind by thinking of sitting out in a blazing sun upon a *hard*, unyielding wooden plank while watching a baseball game which the home team is losing by a depressing score. Or recall a misstep which brought a thud upon a *hard*, marble floor; or recapture the experience of having injured a finger when a *hard*, heavy door slammed upon it.

Whenever the mind can associate a living image or situation with a word the term is said to acquire *experience-definition*. Some individuals rarely impart experience-definition to their speech; they live so close to words that all terms tend to become abstract symbols; words become so over-familiar that their power is taken for granted; they assume that any term, in itself, has power to evoke understanding. Such individuals assume that merely to articulate a word clearly is all that is necessary. This, of course, is false. Recall the implication of Hamlet's answer to Polonius' question: "What do you read, my Lord?" Answer: "Words, words, words."

### *Every Part of Speech Is Rich in Imagery*

Verbs, as action words, are most vital. A few verbs which are increased in power when reinforced with colorful imagery before

utterance are: fight, bite, kick, swim, run, lift, pour, make, scratch, bump, crawl. Experiment with them at once.

Conjunctions may also be enriched with implication: but, yet, and, therefore, hence, nevertheless. Practice using them in meaningful sentences. Prepositions respond readily, partly because it is their office to show relation. Thus, "look *on* the table." "What is *behind* this?" Abstract nouns should always be related to experience-definition, or they convey no concept. Give definition to these ideas: evil, good, idea, morality, height, creation, kindness, bravery, skill, by relating them to definite vivid experiences and using them in colorful sentences.

These principles should be digested and practiced at once; nor should practice be confined to interpretative material. These ideas can be applied to everyday speech; they represent a means of increasing the power of personality in speech.

### *Words As Concepts and Modifiers*

Dramatic literature is built of concepts and their variations. A concept is a thought that holds a specific image or idea. Such thoughts may be *general* or *particular*. To illustrate, everyone who knows what a hat is has a *general* concept for it. To view the *particular* aspects of "hat" one observes its front, back, sides, color, weight, trimmings, and style.

"My dear, I wish Eugénie hats would come back. They're so becoming to me. I think they make me look positively fetching. I mean they sort of set off my profile? And I do have nice hair you know, and they give me such a good chance to show off this wave. Besides, they have an aristocratic suggestion, don't you think; or don't you—the Eugénie hats?"

Here are half a dozen particular or modified aspects which the speaker voices in connection with the general concept "hat." Had she spoken of dresses, husbands, children, or gossip, she would likewise deal with general concepts and would elaborate by dwelling on the concept's modifiers.

By thinking in such terms the *whole* of any idea can be broken into *parts* and treated accordingly. Thus, the main concept of Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is commemoration. All its parts are but modified aspects of the large subject-concept. Again, note that Hamlet treats death as the subject-concept in his famous soliloquy

beginning, *To be or not to be* . . . the greatness of the dramatic passage results from the live, poetic, *more particular* aspects in which death is viewed.

### *Factual Speech and Emotional Speech*

Speech is called factual whenever the aim is concentrated on showing the logical relationship between words, i.e.: thoughts. Factual speech subordinates emotional feeling and emphasizes thought processes. Factual speech deals dispassionately with concepts in general and in particular form.

Emotional speech reverses such dispassionate utterance. The speaker becomes more or less charged with personal excitement and feeling.

It is possible to combine the logical and the emotional. This forms a third classification through which speech can be considered.

### *Analyzing Factual Speech*

Factual speech might be called explicit and objective. Facts are concrete things even when they deal with personality—as the following illustrates.

“I am twenty-two years old and unmarried.”

This information, while personal, is concrete. There is a factual, explicit emphasis and there is a subordination of emotional values. Note the following.

“America has been called the melting pot of the world.”

Here is an excellent instance of factual, logical utterance. The key words, “America,” “melting pot,” “world,” have no logical significance in themselves until they are grouped as a statement. In factual speech aim first to grasp the general concept. In this instance it is *America*. The particular aspect that is stressed is the “melting pot of the world.”

In all interpretative work there is continual need to stress logical relationships.

The factual, explicit values of language are complicated far beyond the needs of fundamental statement. One might, for instance, say: “America . . . melting pot,” and either imply the relationship or use a gesture that suggests the full meaning. By the same process one might say, “I . . . twenty-two . . . unmarried.”

In using this method of analysis the actor readily discovers the truly factual content of his speech before it is weighted or modified by emotional color. This will help him in the distribution of stresses and inflections in interpretation of spoken lines.

### *Analyzing Emotional Content of Statements*

Consider the following statement.

"This town's not big enough for us both!"

The main consideration is the emotional state of the speaker. True, he has uttered a statement of fact, but this is subordinate to the accompanying feeling tone. The skilled interpreter who utters such a line would regard the factual statement as a mere vehicle of the emotional expression.

*Emotional speech must embody the feelings of a definite speaker.* In direct discourse this is easy to appreciate, but in poetry interpretation—where the sentiment may be emotional but where the personality of the speaker is concealed—it is harder to convey a personal interpretation of the experience.

Here is another illustration.

"Have you lost all your money, John?"

The speaker is John's wife. If the family savings have been lost she will realize deeply what this means; thus, the remark embodies the feelings of the speaker and represents no polite question of fact.

As another instance:

"You poor man! Did you hurt yourself?"

The speaker has just seen a man slip on an icy pavement. If she is a selfish person this utterance may be delivered with an artificial display of feeling. But, if the speaker were an elderly lady and sensitive, her reaction would be deeply honest. Most elderly people, having somewhat brittle bones, have a horror of falls.

Try speaking:

"When in disgrace with fortune and men's eyes,  
I all alone bewep my outcast state,  
And trouble deaf Heaven with my bootless cries,  
And look upon myself, and curse my fate. . ."

To do justice to Shakespeare's sonnet a personal feeling tone or emotional identification is necessary. Only then will the words come to life, only then will the listener grasp the speaker's utterance. This is also true of the following excerpt.

"We wandered to the Pine Forest that skirts the Ocean's foam;  
The lightest wind was in its nest, the tempest in its home. . ."

Shelley's lines are of the quality or type which offer most challenge to the interpreter. To some, they may seem narrative, explicit, factual. The opening line speaks of "we" and this seems to distribute the experience more than if the poet said "I." But, if the poem's experience is taken home to one's self and identified with the self, these lyrically emotional concepts, and their more particular aspects, can properly be interpreted. The speaker needs to experience imaginatively the stroll and the emotional pictures revealed.

### *Combining Factual and Emotional Speech*

Ofttimes, as was said, a remark can be both factual (explicit) and emotional (implicit). Imagine an excited speaker defending America:

"America is the melting pot of the world! All nationalities hail America as home!"

Here the speaker reveals an emotional feeling and, at the same time, endeavors to be logical by quoting facts. As another illustration,

*"We wandered to the PINE FOREST that skirts the Ocean's foam. . ."*

Here is something of the same blend. The speaker recites the facts of an experience, but there is enthusiasm and personal sentiment in his delivery as he does so.

These three types of speech, factual, emotional, and factual-emotional, are found in every statement. Look for illustrative examples. Other analyses will be found in the chapter on Monodrama. As a summary of what has been developed, study and explain the following statements.

Creative speakers must be creative listeners.  
Creative speech imparts pictures to listeners.

How can words be made to see, hear, smell, taste, touch?

Factual speech emphasizes logical relationships.

Emotional speech reveals a speaker's personal feeling.

Emotional-factual speech communicates both logic and feeling.

Factual speech is objective, explicit, and somewhat detached.

Emotional speech is subjective, implicit, and intimate.

## CHAPTER EIGHT

### MECHANICS OF MOVEMENT

"It is one thing to have the right conception, quite another to project it across the footlights." HELEN HAYES

TAKE A broom and try to enact the pantomime of an elderly person sweeping. The question at once arises: in what way does the sweeping of the elderly differ from that of the young? A young actor cannot know the answer offhand. Too many factors are involved.

The representation of movement is both *general* and *specific*. Thus, everybody has a general way of sweeping. Student difficulties arise because the apprentice tries to create an illusion by using only the general movements. The fact is that no two people sweep alike. There are many specific factors that tend to produce different actions.

In order to represent the actions of people of either sex and of varying ages one must know something of all the elements which influence a given character's movement. These elements embrace structural, physiological, social, and psychological considerations.

#### *The Two-Fold Purpose of Movement*

The great purpose of man's movements is to carry out the practical work of everyday life. Such movement is called functional or *utilitarian*. It can be seen in sweeping, washing, dressing, reading, writing a letter, lighting a cigarette, picking up objects, and countless similar acts.

Movement's second purpose is expressive or *communicatory*. This involves every bodily action—conscious or unconscious—which reveals thought or feeling. Some communicative movements are scowling, pointing to an object, shrugging the shoulders, tipping the hat, or sitting down lazily.

Note that a movement which has a utilitarian purpose may also be used expressively. A woman may sweep the floor in a way which reveals a great deal about her. One may light a cigarette nervously,

pick up an object clumsily, dress in a careless, slipshod manner, or lounge lazily while reading a book.

Every movement is either utilitarian or communicative in purpose—or it may be both.

### *All Movement Must Be Motivated*

The apprentice actor needs to realize that movement is more than an action or a gesture used on the stage as a means of intensifying a line of dialogue. Indeed, in order to impersonate a character in full, the actor must understand the underlying motives that prompt the movement responses of that character. This must be done at least to the extent that one can interpret the inner motives of another person.

For example, raise and lower the arm. It will be seen that only a small area of the body is affected by this mechanical action. But, when that same arm is lifted for a specific utilitarian or communicatory purpose, the situation is different and much of the body is brought into play. Thus, reaching out to turn on a light switch involves a question of balance. Scratching the foot forces the body to assemble a new and convenient line of movement. Shaking the fist in anger tenses much of the body and stimulates inner activity. The actor must always associate motive with movement.

### *The Structural Basis of Movement*

In order to have conscious control of movement, a certain knowledge of the bony and muscular construction of the body is essential.\*

When a dancer makes a graceful arabesque, what gives form to her pose? Obviously it is the bones, since flesh is non-rigid. It is the bones which give leverage to the sprinter as he springs from starting position. Whether the body is held erect in defiance, or slumps dispiritedly, bones mark the difference of form and posture. A step, a stride, a jump, a turn—all such motions of the body are patterns of movement given form by bone structure.

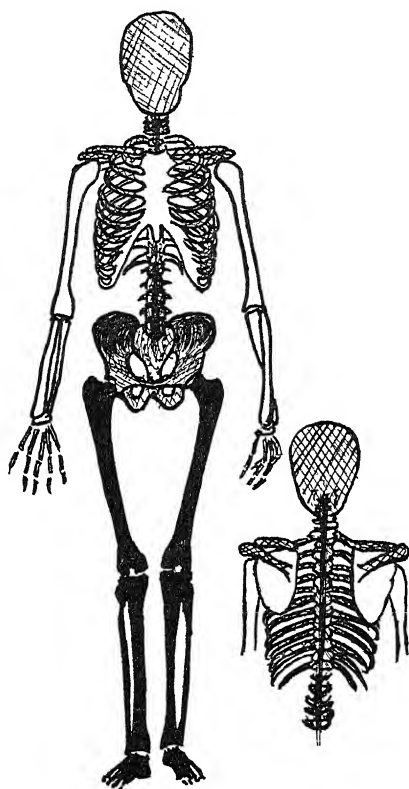
*Correct posture is the right distribution of bodily weights and stresses.* Proper balance of the bones is essential to such distribution. In considering their functioning positions in the skeleton, bones may be said to sit and support and hang.

\* For an authoritative, understandable account of bodily structure and functioning see *The Thinking Body*, by Mabel Elsworth Todd. Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., New York, 1937.

The pelvic bone *sits* upon the supporting leg bones.

The pelvic bone, in turn, *supports* the spine.

The spine *sits* on the pelvic bone or arch, and is at the same time the central axis of *support*.



*Function of bones*

Black area—supports

Shaded area—sits

White area—hangs

The chest or rib cage *sits* on the vertebrae; the lower ribs *hang* from the spine.

The head *sits* on the spine.

The arms *hang* from a sort of yoke, or shoulder girdle.

The shoulder girdle *sits* on the chest cage.

### *The Spine Is the Axis of Balance*

Body balance is maintained in strict accordance with the best engineering principles. The spine may be regarded as the central, vertical axis of balance. In babyhood this spinal axis is quite straight, but it develops a curved form as it begins to support weight.

Starting from the top of the spine, a curve is gradually formed which permits the spine to support the head from its middle just behind the ears. To picture this, imagine a fork supporting an apple from the base of its core.

The next spinal curve is backward, for it is next engaged in carrying the weight of the chest, whose ribs are fastened to its vertebrae.

The next curve is forward, as the spine approaches the bony pelvic arch. This is the region where the body sustains the weight of the head, shoulders, and upper torso, and where most vertical shock is received. Because of this the spine curves out from the lower lumbar area and wraps itself about the pelvic bone—as one might support a weight with a curved palm of the hand.

When it is seen how nature distributes bodily weight one is brought to realize that cooperation with nature's plan of balanced weight stresses results in good posture.

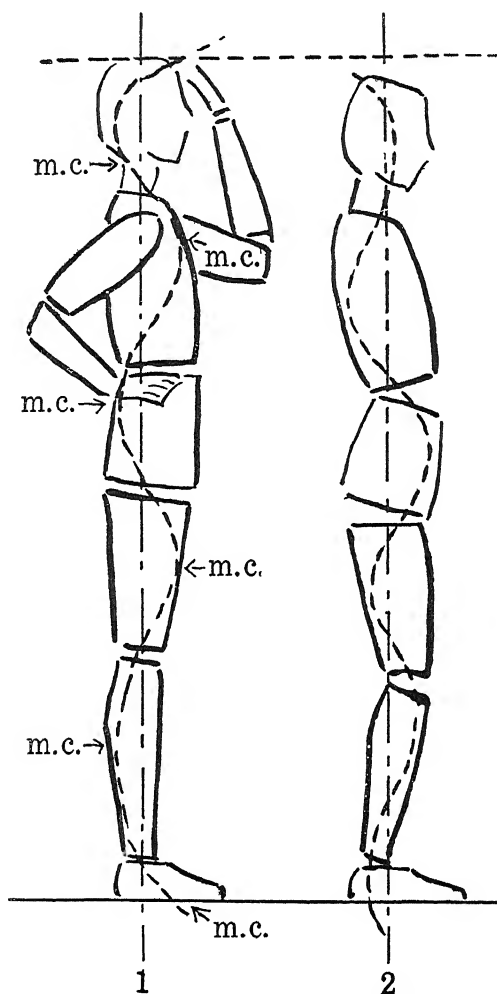


### *Some Principles of Good Posture*

The head should be regarded as an object which sits on the spinal column, rather than as something which hangs from the neck. One should not overwork the neck muscles or ask the shoulders to play a supporting role in head carriage.

Shoulders should be relaxed, not pushed back in stiff, military fashion. If they are tensed they throw the ribs out of line (thus preventing easy breathing), and cramp arm swing. Keep the chest cage lifted but do not try to thrust it outward, for such action produces muscular tension and fatigue. Do not try to deepen the large curve of the spine in an effort to intensify erectness. In proper posture one should visualize a line which would show the ear, shoulder, hip and ankle in plumb.

In the beginning, because of bad habits previously acquired, it may seem uncomfortable to maintain proper position. It is interest-



Courtesy of Paul B Hoeber, Inc.

(1) *Power balancing power* through opposed muscle centers. Muscle centers coordinate when bones balance (2) *Bones opposing bones*—when bones are unbalanced, weight opposes weight throwing muscle centers under tension.

ing to note that although improper posture fatigues the muscles and causes much strain, the individual tends to grow used to this and to lose consciousness of discomfort. Indeed, he is likely to regard a

proper posture as more difficult to maintain than a poor one. This is because he notices the strain caused by any shift to proper posture, whereas he has accustomed himself to, and lost consciousness of, the tensions involved in poor bodily position. However, the unaccustomed strain experienced in assuming proper posture soon wears off. The nervous system of the body maintains a kind of indirect awareness in connection with a properly balanced state.

### *The Secret of Automatic Balance*

In walking up stairs in the dark, how does one know how high to lift the foot? In part this is a learned reaction, but the correct movement is also greatly dependent upon the "feel" for height. This "feel" is also required in ball throwing. Correct gauging of distance is largely the responsibility of the kinesthetic sense, an attribute of which is usually called the proprioceptive or muscle sense in the body.

Some people almost need to take a chair into their hands to be sure of its position and its relationship to themselves, before they sit down. Others are forever bumping into objects—again the result of a poorly developed kinesthetic or proprioceptive sense. Kinesesthesia means self awareness of bodily movement. Such awareness involves chains of unconscious reflexes and is extremely important in the development of graceful movement and poise.

So well does the kinesthetic sense work that one is scarcely aware of its value in helping one to maintain balance against such forces as gravity and inertia. The sense of balance is helped by the maintenance of muscular tone or tonus.

### *Value of Muscle Tone*

Tonus is muscular elasticity and health. Controlled muscles of healthy tone are vibrant and elastic. Healthy muscles have an alive response and a facile ability to relax and contract. They fulfill activity with maximum economy of effort and energy. In an emergency, muscle tone is intensified. After one has done some heavy work one often has the feeling of muscles vibrating. Actors, in the grip of playing a role, sometimes become supercharged with muscle tonus, especially if they are stimulated by feeling the audience respond to their work.

The two extremes of elasticity are tension (active) and relaxa-

tion (passive) In controlling movement, the individual must sense both these extremes and be able to use the muscles at a full degree of stretch without setting up improper and fatiguing tensions. The muscles of an alert person are never relaxed to the point of limpness, nor are they tensed rigidly. A well poised actor maintains what Cornelia Otis Skinner once called "vibrant animation."

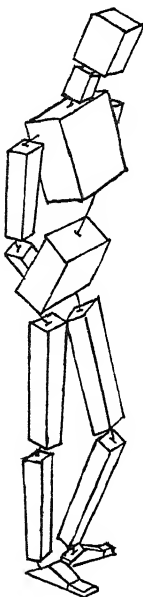
### *Muscular Action and Reaction*

Every action produces reaction. Muscles work on this principle. The system is so constructed that when one set of muscles is at work, its opposing set is put at rest. A rhythmical balance is thus implied. The muscles tense in grasping an object, are sustained while holding it, are tenser in lifting it, and relax after releasing it. Every such action should exhibit a similar "ebb and flow" of energy.

A muscle that is temporarily out of use loses its elasticity for a while. This must be borne in mind when reproducing the activities of a convalescent. Older people suffer from devitalized muscle tone. It is dramatically apparent in the supporting muscles of the thighs and the muscles behind the knees. This is the main reason why the aged guide themselves so carefully when sitting down; they are losing elastic control. Youth, on the contrary, is characterized by high muscle tone and quick, elastic response.

### *Bones Have Hinges*

The bones give form to movement, but the muscles guide the changes of bone position and produce what is called form and line of movement. Muscles are attached to bones by means of tendons and connective tissue. The "hinges" that connect bones are ligaments and cartilaginous tissue. These hinges are activated usually by the conscious control of the muscles connected to the bones. But the movement of muscles and bones may be an unconscious control caused by reflex actions. Reflex actions are automatic responses which have previously been trained and which function without con-



*Bone balance exemplified through concept of blocks*

scious effort. Reflexive activity is very important in the development of graceful movement.

### *Analyzing Character through Movement*

Apart from structural reasons, why does a given individual move fast or slowly; why are his movements certain or uncertain, why is he not capable of doing what someone else does with ease? In the actor's study of the behavior of man much useful data may be gathered from: (1) the individual's *environment* (his home, community, and native land), (2) his *heredity* (how it influences him and what characteristics he inherits from his nationality and race), (3) *occupational and special training* (cultural and technical influences on the normal trend of his behavior), (4) *chemical processes* (effects of glandular activities on behavior), (5) *state of mind and mood* (how thoughts and emotions affect actions).

These major elements are some of the reasons why no two people have the same experiences in the same order and are what determine individuality of behavior.

#### 1. *Environment*

Man is an imitative creature; thus children born in cultured surroundings tend to take on the influence of such environment. They are screened from crude actions; thus they are not likely to make crude gestures. Though they may be full of vitality, they give expression to their animation in controlled ways and tend to portray "civilized" conduct to a high degree.

The individual who is raised in the city is likely to be affected by the tempo of urban life. He responds to the pressure of such environment by striving to maintain the same quick, nervous rhythms, and so his movement is fast. Persons living in surroundings where life is lived leisurely, however, reflect a more leisurely tempo in most instances. This is very noticeable in agricultural communities.

Again, a child raised in a "tough" neighborhood shows little restraint in his expression. He often whoops aloud and practices uncontrolled, swinging gestures to his heart's content. Often thrown on his own resources, he learns to speed up activity in order to compete with companions who have to meet life in the same way.

Those living in noisy, lively households tend to show animation and quick movement; those living in quiet, restrained atmospheres

tend to respond to their home life with moderate, well behaved movements.

## 2. *Heredity*

How does heredity affect movement? Considering the question first on the parental side, children tend to maintain the special characteristics of mother and father. It has been suggested that boys most directly inherit characteristics from the maternal side and that girls are most likely to reveal characteristics of the father. Thus, it is often observed that a child born of slow-thinking parents may be slow-thinking, deliberate of movement, incapable of highly specialized movement such as is required in surgery, very capable in performing movements which require an artisan's skill.

Nationality may affect movement in several ways. Those born of volatile stock, such as Latin peoples, usually demonstrate vivacious activities. Those born of cautious, reserved stock, such as the Scandinavian peoples, are likely to reflect such traits in movement. Finally, there is a structural inheritance: Polish peasant stock for example, is often short legged; Germans tend to be large-boned—as do many Scandinavians. Obviously such inherited characteristics affect movement.

Again, consider a child born of English parents, where the mother is particularly brilliant. Here is an instance of combined parental and national influences. The child may inherit the quick intelligence of its mother and the national tendency toward reserve and equanimity as illustrated by the father.

A few differences of racial inheritance may be suggested by the leisurely quality of Negro activity or the enforced passivity shown by the Oriental. All these parental, national and racial characteristics strongly influence the behavior patterns and movements of the individual.

## 3. *Occupational and Special Training*

Compare the movements of a sculptor or a dancer with those of a prize fighter or a laborer. It is obvious that occupational training affects the behavior of these people. Again, a boy may inherit tendencies toward lively behavior and yet special training may bring him to express himself in quieter ways. For example, ranch life is noted for its strong, quiet, manly activities. In such surroundings a boy might easily find himself modifying his behavior accordingly.

Also, when young people go off to a distant college for four years, the special training and special conditions unite to change the individual's way of doing.

#### 4. *Chemical Processes*

Chemical processes in the body affect glandular activity and this in turn influences behavior and movement. An individual whose system produces too much sugar tends to put on weight. Then, because of greater poundage, activity is more exhausting and movement is retarded. On the other hand, digestive and glandular disturbances often result in nervous activity which produces quick, tense, and over-active motions of the body. Such chemical changes as these are of secondary importance to the actor and are valuable only as suggesting a factor which, though usually beyond control, often affects movement.

#### 5. *State of Mind and Emotion*

There remains but little to be discussed upon the question of the importance of the mind and emotions in the production of movement. It is obvious that a definite state of mind expresses itself in decisive and straightforward patterns of movement. Again, a confused state of mind leads to hesitant, nervous and confused gestures. Likewise, deeply felt emotion always finds an outlet through physical action. Even where the individual is the so-called impassive, reserved type, he must at least make a controlled movement to check the expression of emotion.

#### *Rhythm of Movement*

Whether movement is part of a functional activity or has the effect of communicating a feeling or thought of the individual, it may be considered in three ways. These may be described as rhythm of movement, energy of movement, and quality of movement. These factors vary widely in their manifestation through different individuals.

In the largest sense, everyone tends to express movement in rhythmical patterns. In such acts as hoeing, whittling, typing, reading, walking, sewing, scrubbing, the bodily agents involved in the activity express a clear, repetitive pattern and a tempo slow or fast. The basic determinant of rhythmical movement is muscle tone. Muscular elasticity decides how well the individual will contract and relax the muscles as they aid the bones to stand, sit, and walk, or

lift, push, and throw. If the muscles are in healthy condition and have good tone, the individual is capable of quick, sustained movement. If muscle tonus is weak, the opposite is true. It is well to observe that when the muscles are engaged in unfamiliar activities fatigue sets in quickly.

Speed of movement depends largely upon elasticity and recuperative power. The kinesthetic sense tends to coordinate movement so that the required rest periods for the muscles are provided. This establishes a basic rhythm that is physiological. It further tends to make the individual emphasize, or accent, his movements at those moments when the muscles are best poised for contractive effort. The two extremes of rhythmical movement are the slow, languid, relatively unaccented, and the quick, vital, and relatively forceful.

### *Vigor of Movement*

The poles of vigor of movement are the dynamic, or vital, and the adynamic, or relatively inert. The state of full physical inertia for human beings appears in sleep. Energy of movement is further influenced by the modifying factors of physical, mental, and emotional nature.

The factors which most immediately affect vigor of movement are health, strength, and muscle tone. Healthy individuals display a positive energy of movement. Strength in the individual, however, is more than an ability to lift heavy weights; it is also a matter of his "staying powers" or endurance, ability to recuperate quickly and to maintain consistency of effort. Some people are able to lift weights but they have no endurance. Others possess staying powers which permit them to carry on activity for a long time but they cannot lift objects of great weight.

The former type tend to throw themselves into a task with great zest which soon peters out. The latter go on at the same steady, apparently effortless, pace. In considering muscle tone one should observe that when elasticity is lacking, there is flabbiness of muscle and no ability to respond with vigor. But, when muscle tone is high there is quick recuperative power, and the individual displays ability to apply himself forcefully to a given task.

The mental and emotional factors which affect vigor of movement are often so closely related that they may be considered together. Thus, the woman who gets emotional satisfaction from

housework obviously will put more effort into it. The man who happily mends shoes will repair them with vim. But emotion can also put a brake on energy. She who detests household work will perform her tasks with little vigor, and he who dislikes shoe repairing will not apply much energy to it.

Concentrative ability, when high, stimulates the individual to pour all of his powers into a given task. But those whose consciousness is pulled this way and that by several stimuli cannot direct their forces to one particular channel of energy. Thus their power is dissipated and, at best, they exhibit vigor only in short bursts. In social conduct such people use vague, uncoordinated gestures. In everyday life there is no vital swing and grip to the manner in which they respond to a given task.

Many people seek escape from feelings of inferiority, or long-standing worries, through intensive application to work. Such individuals are not particularly given to talk. Again, they have such deep emotional feelings that (lacking speech expressiveness) their only outlet is through vigorous activity.

### *Quality of Movement*

The extreme forms of movement are popularly described as graceful or crude. A little experimentation will prove that it is very difficult to act gracefully or crudely through conscious effort. Quality of movement is largely determined by factors of which one is quite unconscious. It has been estimated that only ten per cent of movement may be considered as being under conscious control.\* The rest of the activity is reflex, usually performed automatically and without special awareness. Much of the ninety per cent of unconscious activity is directed to the nervous system, the respiratory system, the digestive system, the visceral system, and routine external actions which are largely automatic—such as balancing the body.

Conscious control is most often applied in connection with manual activity (handling tools), locomotion (walking, running, leaping, jumping), orientation (turning the body, bending, reaching). Most of these activities (walking, sitting, standing, turning the pages of a book, eating, scratching the face) may be performed without specific awareness on the part of the individual. *The more familiar an activity becomes, the greater the likelihood that one will perform*

\* Mabel Elsworth Todd, *The Thinking Body*, Chapter 9. Paul B. Hoeber, New York, 1937.

*such actions through unconscious reflexes.* This reflex action is sometimes referred to as habitualized movement.

*Cultivating Grace and Controlling Awkwardness*

The kinesthetic sense governs the relative grace or crudeness of one's actions. Thus, when the individual prepares to catch a ball, the feet automatically take a stance which aids the catch. The very decision as to where to stand in relation to the oncoming ball is largely determined by this sense working in conjunction with the eye. One estimates, through the kinesthetic sense, how high the hand should be lifted in turning on an electric switch, what distance is involved in mounting a step, and when the body is close enough to a chair to drop into it.

To say that a person is "graceful" is to say that his reflexes are functioning effectively and smoothly and that conscious control is well coordinated. To say that someone is "crude" in movement is to say that coordination and reflex actions are not well timed, that the individual's kinesthetic sense is poorly developed and undependable, that he is forced to exert conscious control over movements which, in most people, are reflex actions.

## CHAPTER NINE

### CREATIVE MOVEMENT

"People's visual responses are much more acutely sensitized than their aural responses " ROBERT EDMUND JONES

UTILITARIAN MOVEMENT *is activity carried on in tasks where the principal purpose is practical execution.*

This is a kind of activity which is often poorly understood and poorly used. There must be kept in mind a clear distinction between movement which simply performs a function (utilitarian), and action which is not only functional but conveys particular information as well (communicatory).

#### *Reproducing Utilitarian Movement*

Impersonation of an elderly character who comes on stage and shells peas requires one to bear in mind several practical considerations regarding her utilitarian activities. How does she walk? Is she weakened? Is she hesitant?—How does she shell the peas? Slowly? Steadily? Tremblingly? To answer such questions one should think in terms of devitalized energy and reduced muscle tone; one should reflect on how much elasticity such a character is likely to have in the leg and thigh muscles.

In deciding how such a character sits one should think in terms of bone structure and recall what the previous chapter suggested about the arms and chest. These areas can be made flat, rounded, subordinated, to suggest a character who has become round-shouldered and flat-chested from too much sitting and bending over.

#### *Suggesting Quality of Movement*

Quality of movement is an ever-important consideration. It is well to think in terms of "movement response" patterns. Thus, to characterize a clumsy, inept, or crude person, one should form a concept of a series of related movements. If the character is to enter a room and trip over or bump into furniture and generally

perform crude actions, one needs to visualize all these movements in advance.

Conscious control should be applied to such character movements. By making movement conscious one is more likely to suggest roughness and crudeness, since the normal action of the reflexes is being interfered with.

### *Experimenting to Secure Quality of Movement*

Concentrate upon one arm. Begin to tense it at the shoulder, follow down the upper arm, down the forearm, the wrist, the palm, each individual finger. By this time the entire arm should be vibrating with tension. Slowly withdraw power from the fingers, the palm, the wrist, and the rest of the arm. Let the arm hang limply, being conscious of the extreme lightness which follows such an exercise. Before this feeling wears off, approach a chair with the purpose of lifting it. Apply one hand deliberately to the back of the chair. Be careful that an instinctive kinesthetic sense does not defeat the intent of awkwardly grasping the chair. Instead of letting the fingers begin to curl around the wood as they approach it, hold them stiff and apply the palm first. Stiffly let the fingers clutch the chair back. Watch what the wrist does. Do not let it relax, but experiment to see whether a backward or forward curve adds further stiffness. Do not let the lower and upper arm muscles relax too much. The whole object of this exercise is to secure conscious control of the misapplication of power.

Experiment similarly with the other arm, with the legs. Walk about while tensing the muscles of the calf. Tense the thigh muscles and walk. Walk flat-footed with leg muscles tensed. Walk flat-footed with leg muscles relaxed. Walk with the hips thrown back out of line, then walk with the hips forward. Turn attention to the spine. Try to straighten its curves. This throws the upper torso forward. Walk about in this position. Next, deepen the larger spinal curve and walk.

Every significant change of body posture modifies more than simple body position or line of movement. It directly affects the external form which one applies to a given task. One "feels" different when trying to perform such random experimental tasks as lifting a chair, putting on a coat (being careful to maintain changed body posture), walking across the room, sitting down, dealing cards, or writing. The reason for this different "feel" is that one's kinesthetic

sense is almost bewildered. The different bodily tension or different posture is strange.

### *Graceful Movement Is Largely Reflexive*

Suppose, however, that you wish to impersonate a graceful and cultured person. Proceed to tense the whole body. Take hold of separate sets of muscles, foot, calf, thigh, back centers, neck, head, upper arm, lower arm, fingers. Extend tension from the toes up through the top of the head and down through the finger tips. Tense every muscle to a point of trembling vibrancy. Slowly let tension trickle out of each part of the body, finally releasing itself through the toes. Breathe slowly and rhythmically several times. All this tones the muscles, makes them responsive and vibrant. Proceed through the actions required for impersonation of any given character.

The secret of suggesting a graceful character—if there is a secret—is to keep the body balanced, to keep the muscles free of wrong tensions, and finally to practice, practice, practice. Movement must be as smooth and unstudied as possible. Graceful movement must be *reflexive*.

### *Communicating Meaning through Movement*

*Communicatory movement is activity which consciously or unconsciously serves to reveal or intensify thought or feeling.*

Expressive movement may be compared to ancient sign writing and word pictures. Movement which communicates meaning speaks in phrases and sentences. Thus, a nod of the head implies "Yes," and a shrugged shoulder may suggest "I don't care," or "Go ahead if you want to."

Of course communicatory movement is not always a conscious action. If people knew the unconscious suggestions they give through movement—frightened blinking of the eyes or a pugnacious swinging of the shoulders—they would quickly modify such tell-tale actions. Unconscious character revelation through movement is of great dramatic value to the actor.

Several years ago a popular song went the rounds:

"Your lips tell me no, no;  
But there's yes, yes in your eyes."

Movement of the eyes is here taken as being more honestly revealing than the spoken word. Why is it that movement often reveals truth

and gives the lie to one's spoken assertions? The emotional apparatus is largely responsible. Everyone at some time or other expresses one of the more common emotional states of:

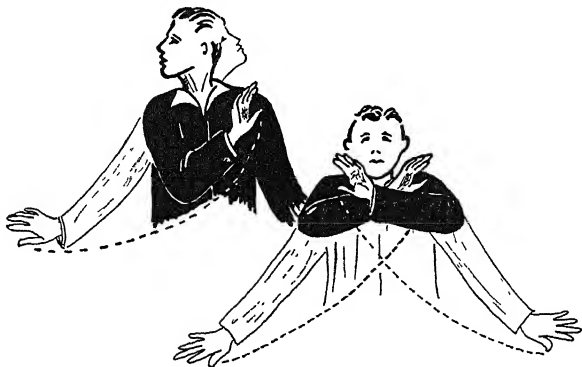
1. Anger: Arising from opposition
2. Joy: Arising from degrees of anticipation
3. Sorrow: Derived from frustration
4. Fear: Derived from degrees of anticipated frustration

Whenever one of these moods is strongly stimulated the individual must find release for the emotion aroused. Invariably this outlet is physical action. If one is frustrated in a desire to go to a party, for instance, even if he protests stoutly that he does not mind, an observant eye will have caught his immediate physical reaction upon learning the news. It may have been a tightening of the mouth, a frowning of the forehead, a tensing of the shoulders, a droop of the chest, a few unconscious steps, or a clenching of the fist.

The relationship of emotion and movement is most important to the actor. Wherever emotion is found related to physical activity, emotion is a cause and movement is an effect.

### *Communicating through Gestures*

Expressional movement functions in two different ways. First, there may be facial play accompanied by general activity of the entire body. Second, there may be specific gestures made by the head, face, arms, hands, torso, or legs. In making a character analysis the term "gesture" is applied to movements large enough to be observed by all spectators. Such gesture must be understood in its parts before it can convey something to an audience.



*Follow through of movement* "Extensive gestures serve to enlarge images."

Gestures can be *intensive* or *extensive*. Intensive gestures emphasize meaning. Extensive gestures serve to help enlarge images and to suggest them in terms of visible movement.

Intensive devices—such as doubtfully rubbing the face, clenching the fists, swaying the hips, or tapping the foot—serve to stress emotional states and thought.

Extensive movements are gestures of height, weight, texture, form, grace, crudeness, and dimension. Thus, through gesture one can indicate the height of an object, the weight of an imaginary package, the sheer quality of a dress, the roundness of a circle, the graceful contour of a statue, the crudeness of a model, the dimension of a stadium, the mental, servile or haughty attitudes of others, the high moral tone of still another, the radiance of an imaginative individual, or the emotional state of a friend. All such movements extend and enlarge a concept.

Such actions must always seem to be spontaneous, yet gestures cannot be created haphazardly. "External gesture," says François Delsarte, who made the most exhaustive study of expressive movement ever attempted, "being only the reverberation of interior gesture, which gives it birth and rules it, should be its inferior in development."

According to M. Gertrude Pickersgill, "When a gesture is made with an awkward jerk there has been no preparation. The hand springs out like a mechanical signal; again, when a gesture is uncertain, there is no climax and the whole is ineffective. A gesture must disappear to the normal gradually." \*

### *Expressional Effectiveness of Body Areas*

"The ease in the ability to recognize a particular expression is dependent," William H. Blake has found, "upon the number of bodily agents involved." † He lists the physical areas in the order of diminishing importance. First, he says, is the value of the entire body including the face. An audience usually watches the interpreter's face and, subconsciously, receives impressions from total bodily expression. When the face is too far away the next most important area is the torso, including the arms. Third in importance

\* H. Gertrude Pickersgill, *Practical Miming*, chapter 3. Pitman, London, 1935.

† William H. Blake, *Preliminary Study of the Interpretation of Bodily Activity*. Teachers College, Columbia University, 1933.

is the body base—the feet, knees, and hips. Finally, he lists the head and shoulders with face excluded.

Movement in these areas may be illustrated thus. First, imagine a furious individual grimacing facially, head out-thrust, neck shortened, shoulders hunched, upper torso leaning forward out of line, arms extended semi-circularly and fists clenched, hips back, knees tensed, and feet wide apart.

Secondly, imagine the picture created by someone expressing mainly through torso and arms. His chest may be deflated and his arms may sag inertly to suggest dispiritedness. Or, his inflated chest and vital arm swing will suggest energy and confidence. Again, the arms may be folded defiantly over the chest, may be held akimbo, may droop, may offer a thousand variations which express thought and feeling.

Third, consider the body base. One hip thrown out of line implies awkwardness, sophistication, sensuousness—depending upon the mood being outpictured generally.

Fourth, the head and shoulder area proves only relatively effective for more than one reason. The shoulders rarely initiate expressiveness. They are most valuable in intensifying other elements of bodily posture. And when they do initiate reactions they suggest weak, negative statements—such as a shrug which implies: “Go ahead if you want to,” or “I don’t care.”

It is true that the head can be thrust forward to suggest interest, or it can be tossed back to imply disdain, or it can hang to the side to communicate doubt or puzzlement. But, if the face cannot be seen revealing the same idea, there is danger that such gestures will be misunderstood. If the spectators are too far away to interpret facial play they cannot understand what head movements are intended to imply; therefore, they depend upon the expressiveness of other bodily agents to picture the character’s meaning.

In connection with facial play T. Earl Pardoe \* makes the interesting observation that man has many more ways of reacting to unpleasant stimuli than to pleasant ones. Of twenty-four pairs of muscles in the face he notes that eighteen are used for showing unpleasant responses and that only six are devoted to recording the pleasant. He feels that here is reason to believe that tragedies and tragedians represent drama and acting at its greatest range and in-

\* T. Earle Pardoe, *Pantomimes for Stage and Study*. Appleton, New York, 1931.

tensity because of the greater variety of expressions through which drama and acting of this type may drive home its meanings.

### *The Focus of Facial Expression*

The dominant focus of facial expression lies in the eye and in the chin. When a glance is unwavering it commands attention and suggests power and concentration. When it is shifty it implies weakness and vacillation. Study a number of newspaper and magazine photographs and observe people in action. Discover how completely facial expression corresponds to what the eyes convey. Not for nothing have they been called "the windows of the soul."

In many ways the chin is as important a focal point as the eye. Look at some friend and let the chin "lead" the rest of the head. This action concentrates a feeling of power. Conversely, let the head sag and withdraw the chin and note how power diminishes.

### *Coordinated Movement*

*Coordinate movement is artistic execution and communication of mind action and movement through a visual pattern of behavior.*

Creative movement is poised and rhythmical in its expression; it is coordinated. It is not an end in itself but is only a means to an end. It is free of fumbling, vague, indecisive movement—such as people make when they fumble wordlessly with a button or purse, or make vague gestures of the hands while addressing some group, or simply stand weakly and indecisively. Coordinated movement is best expressed by those who, however spontaneously seeming, follow a rhythmical pattern. Such movement marks the actor as one aware of the meanings conveyed through behavior patterns. Creative, coordinated movement is a matter of trained execution; it embraces both utilitarian and communicative actions.

### *Coordinating Movement for Special Purposes*

The expert diver is not only a miracle of grace as he cleaves the air, but is also one who has practiced endlessly to secure effect with a minimum of activity and a maximum of rhythmical coordination. The actor, when a finished artist, is so accomplished in his use of movement that he does not reveal so much as an unnecessary lip twitch while sustaining a role. Economical, rhythmical movement is employed in all highly skilled activity, from dancing, playing football, or shining shoes, to riveting steel girders.

Contrast the behavior of some of these people outside of their specialized activity. The boxer whose ring work is admirable may be very awkward at a dinner table. The football player may be inept upon the dance floor. The bootblack probably will not show much grace in walking or in posture.



*Coordination*—Football player wheeling to avoid tackle.

### *Everyone Needs to Coordinate Movement Consistently*

The actor, however, must be in command of himself at all times and continually express himself in patterns of coordinated activity. The basis of such control lies in a knowledge and application of proper line of movement: *physical balance*, already described in the preceding chapter under "Structural Basis of Movement." Grace, which is largely synonymous with coordinated movement, is the continued display of balance.

The practical value of these observations and continued experiment will become apparent when they are practiced in connection with improvisation. In all imitative or impersonative work one must apply rhythm, vigor, and quality, with conscious control. Later this

control will be taken over by the developed kinesthetic sense and habits will be formed.

### *Stylized Movement*

The actor will find that certain mediums of the theatre and mono-theatre—such as the musical reading—require the display of an imaginative type of movement based upon coordination. Such movement is usually termed stylized or imaginative, inasmuch as it is not realistic but symbolic interpretation of human activities. Stylized movement is symbolic in that an audience comprehends its meanings through mental associations. It is comparable to plastic art, for it requires broad, expressive lines of significant action. There is a close relationship between the movement of the musical reader and line of movement in sculpture.

There is a unique characterization in the *line* that seems to float, to lean, to fly; the *line* that suggests weight, form, texture, size, and temperature, of an object described; the *line* that portrays pride, grace, awkwardness, bravery or preparedness; the *line* that suggests direction or measurement.

The best place to study imaginative movement is in the art museum. There one will find artistic use of four types of line of movement: horizontal, vertical, curved, and broken.

*Horizontal* lines mainly express repose, as when the arms are folded. Such a line is also used to lend the idea of distance. Note, in Raphael's picture, *Sistine Madonna*, how the extended arm of the left figure suggests this.

*Vertical* lines are closely associated with ideas of dignity and solemnity. The phrase, "He was a lord of high domain," appeals more persuasively to one's imagination if the speaker uses a vertical line—first, by lifting the chest and head to imply grandeur and, at the same time, by extending the arm in a downward movement. Try this.

*Curved* lines emphasize a graceful appeal. They are used to create a flow of controlled, connected, and rhythmical movement. Thus, a rounded, sweeping movement of the arms—"and a great multitude came to hear him speak"—intensifies the image of great, continuous action. Again, where one has occasion to speak of a feminine character, the image can be emphasized by undulating, graceful curves.

*Broken* lines include jerky lines and suggest conflict, resistance,

unrest. Note how elbows jutting out from the body imply truculence. Likewise, an arm bent and raised close to the face suggests conflict.

The student who works in mediums of the theatre which demand imaginative movement should assemble his own knowledge on this subject, working out from the broad lines of classification suggested above. In addition to visits to art museums, a great deal of valuable information can be secured from members of plastic art classes and from books of paintings and sculpture.

## CHAPTER TEN

### CHARACTERIZATION

"Trifles make perfection, but perfection is no trifle."

MICHAEL ANGELO

THE APPRENTICE ACTOR should equip himself to portray character successfully. And successful impersonation of character begins with imitation of the actions of people seen in everyday life. The student must observe traits and mannerisms in persons and develop his ability to re-present them before audiences. The way to do this is by reproducing actual details of speech, facial play and movement. This is imitation. Every good actor is a good imitator, although a good imitator is not necessarily a good actor. A story is told of David Garrick: that he took his place in a coach and then, after the driver had started, put his head out the door and addressed the man in so many different voices and with such variety of facial expression that the poor driver imagined that a crowd of men had somehow got into his coach. Garrick, the genius of his time, knew the value of imitations. Undoubtedly in his youth he approached character study through imitation.

#### *Acting Is Based on Imitative Ability*

Imitation in dramatic art is the simulation of what the actor sees on the surface of human behavior. Impersonation requires a further study of what lies inside. Imitation asks *How?* How does the subject speak, how does he gesture? Impersonation adds *Why?* Why does he speak so, why does he gesture so? Imitation is objective in methods and purposes, for it deals entirely in externalities of character. Impersonation not only is objective but also subjective in methods and purposes, for it deals with the character's *all*. Imitation reproduces man's external behavior; impersonation tries to show his soul as well.

## IMITATING

The easiest and best way to develop acting ability is through constant imitation.

A valuable practice method for developing speech awareness is to sit at the radio and copy voices—pitch, intonation, speed in speaking and quality. Use a chart similar to the one in the chapter on Dialect Mastery (page 214). Repeat phrases and sentences after the subject. Choose subjects who can be seen on the stage, at a political meeting, clubhouse, business meeting, in a movie, trolley car, waiting room or department store.

*Speech Imitation Is a Rich Field*

The average person's ear records only what it expects to hear—and not what another voice actually utters. The average student also hears inaccurately until he trains himself to do otherwise. When he does so, the variety of voice differences will prove astonishing. It is literally true that no two people speak alike.

Make a point each day of charting at least one element of voice difference, such as tempo, and soon the voice changes available for acting will be amazing. Every voice, of course, has its own individual pitch tone: high, low, or medium. In a voice that drops in pitch, try to discover the reason. Other voices rise, others keep to a monotonous level.

Tempo varies a great deal: fast, slow, average, drawling, uncertain, quick with emotion, slow with doubt. It is interesting to note how voice tempo and tone vary in members of a family who are quite alike in other respects. Observe that some voices, while they have a rich, singing tone, have little individuality or true color; all that one hears is a monotonous richness. Singers are often marked by this trait. Other voices are dry, suggestive of the scholar's study—as though the speaker were detached from the reality of living. This "sepulchral" tone varies widely.

Observe what is called the *feeling tone*. This may prove surly, doubtful, whining, sunny, insinuating, rasping, cruel, bitter, amused, bored, timid, proud, vain, juvenile, simpering, supercilious, haughty, shrewd, implacable—the list is endless.

To sum up, listen for intonational differences, voice qualities, tempo, feeling tone. It is possible, as radio proves, to use speech as a means of revealing every facet of personality.

*Recreating Characteristic Movement*

*Look to see.* The average eye is as untrained as the average ear. A separate section of one's notebook should be reserved for movement. Here, too, the aim should be to record one series of related movements per day. The series should be organized in accordance with the following suggestions and analyses.

To the actor, *line of movement* means much more than correct posture. It represents the total bodily suggestion of character; legs, arms, torso and head all contribute a total visual impression. Imitate and give a one word description of what the following lines of movement suggest.

- A woman standing with hip thrown out \_\_\_\_\_
- A man, hands in pockets, rocking on heels \_\_\_\_\_
- A woman whose body seems to "peer" forward \_\_\_\_\_
- A man with weight on the back foot \_\_\_\_\_
- A girl with toes pointed outward \_\_\_\_\_
- A boy with feet wide apart \_\_\_\_\_

A line of movement is also revealed by one's sitting position: persons sit with a force that seemingly keeps them nailed to a chair; others poise nervously on the edge; some sit defensively forward; others slump boredly; still others suggest timidity, tension, relaxation, poise, egotism. In observing these differences note the head angle, tension in the neck, relaxation of shoulders, position of chest; what they do with hands, knees and feet.

Walking, of course, produces innumerable other differences of character. All these walks represent but a few of the typical walks that the actor masters: the roll of the sailor, the springing walk of the dancer, the shuffle of the tramp, the swagger of a blusterer, the trot of a small, energetic woman, the mincing gait of a coquette, the stiff stride of the militant feminist, the uncertain totter of an older person, the adolescent slouch of the supercilious young, the deliberate pace of the minister, the farmer, the bouncing steps of the jockey, the tired drag of a miner, the clomp-clomp of an inveterate horseman.

*Reproducing Gesture*

Moment-to-moment changes of thought and feeling are revealed through the head, shoulders, chest, pelvis, elbows, hands, hips, knees, and feet. Verify the following observations and make expanded notes.

Tilt the head and chin far back, far to the side, far forward. Which of these positions suggests haughtiness? anxiety? timidity?

Clasp the hands and push elbows back, then push them forward. Does the gesture suggest over-anxiety? Hold the elbows close to the body. What does this convey? What feeling is induced by swinging the elbows wide of the body?

Shoulders that sit and elbows that hang naturally and easily from their supports and are free of tension, show grace. What is signified by shoulders that are lifted in hunched fashion? Or shoulders that are pushed forward? Or shoulders pushed too far back?

There are hundreds of characteristic gestures made with the hands, wrists and fingers. Observe those who clench their fists, play with accessories, continually put an imaginary stray lock of hair into place, scratch at the face, neck and body, twiddle their fingers, hold them together, let them hang loose and flabby, tense their wrists.

These suggestions will give an idea of what to look for in the way of gesture, there is enough here to set the imagination working. Recorded knowledge along these lines is the actor's stock in trade—just as a knowledge of the body and its ills serves the doctor, or as a knowledge of bookkeeping represents the professional data by which the clerk earns his salary.

### *The Implications of Facial Expression*

Facial play, beyond the fifteenth row of an auditorium, is mainly a blurred picture. To the aspiring screen actor its value for close-up work is, of course, great. Yet there is a more important, general value; when one's face assumes an expression it is much easier to induce the voice and body to assume the same thought-feeling pattern.

Thus eyebrows and foreheads that never move, indicate placidity or serenity or stupidity—depending upon the inferences that can be drawn from accompanying body movement. Eyelids that droop suggest slyness, shrewdness, sensuality or sophistication—again depending upon what the line of movement suggests.

Lips that protrude paint a picture of a fleshy, gross or indifferent person, one who is sensual, or one who likes his food too well. Firm pressed lips are often the mark of determined or narrow personalities. Lips held a little apart suggest a more open minded type; further apart, stupidity. Lips curl in contempt, lift at the sides in a sneer, are sucked in at moments of timidity.

*Summarizing Imitation*

One must not lose sight of the fact that the art of acting is also spoken of as the art of reacting, and that expression is not a cause but a result. Properly interpreted these axioms mean that when understanding is deep and free flowing, expression takes care of itself. But it is further true that the actor aims not only to free *his* expressional powers but also to reproduce the expressional patterns of others. Successfully to do this means that he must have wide acquaintance with characteristic modes of behavior which others reveal. This is the whole purpose of imitation: to encourage observation and to increase one's ability to portray types that differ widely from one's self.

## IMPERSONATING

Impersonation as loosely used means *any* attempt by an actor to portray, dramatically, some other person's or character's behavior. Thus one would say: The art of story telling employs but little impersonation.

*Impersonations Must Be Compact*

An impersonation, is but a brief character picture, therefore the *key* to character must be given to the audience quickly. Time is so short that only a few sides of character can be shown. The side that should be emphasized most clearly is the one which contributes most to the dramatic purpose. This principle is true of every form of acting.

Stage characters are entitled to very few reticences; whatever they think or feel that is important to the advancement of action or illumination of characterization must be made clear to the audience through appropriate speech and movement devices. The actor must give tangible picturization to everything that adds to necessary audience knowledge. Even two hours is all too short to reveal a character that has been growing for fifteen or fifty years. The actor must use every moment of his brief time to fill his stage pictures with meaning.

*Making Pictures of the Intangible*

"The actor must give tangible picturization to everything that adds to necessary audience knowledge." This means that many thoughts must be made concrete.

The actor uses his migratory sense to explore the inner being of a character. Once he learns something of the character's inner conflicts these must be expressed externally; the unseen must be turned into the seen, the felt into the expressed, the unknown into the known, the subjective into the objective. A character must be stripped of reticences: whatever he thinks or feels that is important to character revelation or advancement of action must be out-pictured clearly.

Suppose a father has just been told by his daughter that she wants to marry a man whom he knows to be unscrupulous. This father is sensible and knows that love sometimes works miracles of reformation. But the father's worry is, *will* the miracle happen? He also knows that his daughter, being of age, will not bow to opposition. The father's doubts and secret anguish must be externalized.

He may wince, pace up and down, clasp his hands, squirm in a chair, close his eyes, tense his lips, square his shoulders, toy with an object, talk hoarsely, pleadingly, cajolingly, threateningly or argumentatively. He may do many things—depending on what type of man he is. But whatever he does must be symbolic of his honest, inner felt state. The actor does not simply portray these evidences of feeling merely to provide action; his responsibility is to reveal the perturbation of a particular person so that the audience may correctly interpret these external showings of inner conflict.

### *Expressing Emotion by Withholding It*

Sometimes it is false to convey an inner feeling too concretely. Suppose that a mother receives word that her son has just been killed. Instead of storming or having hysteria, her reaction may be to freeze. When this is in character it is a more terribly gripping reaction than any other—for one thing, it makes audience suspense last longer.

But one must be careful of this method of characterizing, called "underplaying." There have been exponents of this type of acting for the last few hundred years and there will always be some actors who make use of it. A few years ago, largely through the stimulus of Noel Coward, this school of repressed acting achieved quite a vogue. It did not last, partly because audience taste changes and mainly because an audience all too soon becomes bored by such un-emotional acting.

### *Summarizing Imitation and Impersonation*

Imitation and impersonation have two values: they may be used as (a) a means to an end—as a means of practicing the fundamentals

of acting, (b) as an end in themselves—as when a mono-actor wishes to develop these arts as a branch of mono-theatre, described in the chapter on the impersonator.

The practice of imitation leads to development of observation skill and to the accumulation of varied expressional equipment—laughs, sighs, voice colors such as a tone surly, proud, impatient, etc., all kinds of mannerisms and gestures, an expert knowledge of the implications shown by head movements, shoulder tensions, elbow actions, lines of movement and stances.

The practice of impersonation leads to the highest and finest expression of acting skill—the illumination of type characters who thereupon are seen as more than types: as *individuals* of a given type. Every group actor needs to consider and practice the elements of impersonation. To the student who seeks aid in development through dramatics, the art is engrossing, entertaining to one's friends and instructive to one's self.

#### IMPROVISING

Whether one attempts to portray one character or a thousand, impersonation relies entirely upon what the student has *within*. Aptness of portrayal depends upon the powers of observation and application. Improvisation serves as a practice vehicle whereby a character concept can be translated into reality. In improvisation the student is given a basic idea and told: "Improvise on this; show us the action-equivalent of a haughty spirit; render for us the speech pattern—intonation, rhythm, stress, pronunciation—of a Southern belle or of a New England tobacco grower."

*Improvisation is the testing ground of theory.* The kind of improvisation suggested here, and it is a kind that should be practiced while mastering any kind of dramatic sketch, is similar to that used in the old *Commedia del Arte* where the players agreed upon a situation to be dramatized and then acted it out—improvising (making up) the lines and character expositions as they went along.

Improvisation is the most valuable instrument at the command of the apprentice-actor. In improvisation the student "makes up" lines and invents stage business as he goes along. But it is always essential for the young actor to know what he wants to achieve before starting to improvise. Writing original material, described in Chapter Fourteen, is excellent as a form of improvisation.

There is absolutely no value in improvisation unless one understands exactly why it is undertaken. Why improvise the actions and speech, for example, of an aged person? Because such improvisation represents a challenge to the student to show, concretely, how well the mental makeup of the aged is understood and how well one can reproduce speech and movement. In improvisation nothing stands between the student and the character—no lines, no rigid dramatic situation, no specific emotional, mental, speech, or action pattern. The only requirement is: "Show how well you can subordinate your personal way of doing to that of the improvised character's. Demonstrate how natural and free-flowing you can make this given character."

Before undertaking any of the following character improvisations, think. Know far more about the character than the specific improvisation calls for. If it is an exercise in *seeing*, know whether the portrayal will involve the introvert or the extrovert; whether the characterization will be of a person with pronounced mental or emotional reactions, graceful or awkward, a native or a foreigner, a character who is strongly original or simply one who reacts to others.

### *Improvising with Sensory Reactions*

1. *Seeing*. In the role of a character or purely as yourself, you are "visiting" a disabled friend. Use speech and movement to describe: (a) a recently held Christmas party for orphan children, (b) the current County Fair, (c) a fracas which starts outside his window, (d) a recent trip abroad, (e) an exciting sporting event. After deciding which of these situations you want to outline, work out (mentally) a way of doing it. Arrange your description in a rising emotional pattern—saving some climactic details for the last.

2. *Hearing*. In the role of a character or purely as yourself, you are "at a party" and you hear yourself discussed. Either (a) the conversation ridicules your clothes, mannerisms, speech, or ideas, (b) or it praises you in these respects.

Respond in pantomimic irony to the reading of a boring letter being read by a friend. Seat yourself and respond to a telephone call: fidget and give excuses (vocally or pantomimically), turn the subject, then listen to some meaty gossip. Take time for reactions physical, facial and vocal. At a concert, beat time to the music, respond ecstatically or disagreeably. Describe what you heard in the music.

3. *Tasting*. Your car has "broken down" and you are forced to sit and wait for help—and meanwhile you must converse with a vulgar native of the district. He is a greasy, unkempt, leering individ-

ual. Pantomimically, and delicately, suggest the nausea, queasiness, revolt which you feel as he tells about sordid local matters.

You are eating oysters for the first time and do not like them. Do not let your auditor see how distasteful they are as you both talk of food in general.

Gossip about some prim and proper friend whom you saw in an embarrassing predicament. Fairly *mouth* the details you observed and *lick your chops* as you tell what you think of him or her. Tell this in a rising emotional pattern, saving a juicy morsel of gossip over which you *lick your lips* for the climax.

4. *Touching*. You are walking over a pebbly beach in your bare feet and trying to talk nonchalantly to a new acquaintance whom you wish to impress.

You are forced to lift eels out of a fisherman's pouch and to pretend a liking for fishing. You are sitting on a hard board at a baseball game and diplomatically trying to persuade your friend to leave.

You have just returned with a friend from an exhausting hike. You come in and throw yourself gratefully upon a soft couch; but, tired as you are, your gratefulness for the soft couch does not keep you from interspersing (amid groans) of how you admired your charming companion.

5. *Smelling*. Impersonate a "nosey" person shopping in a grocery store. Pick and decide among the following items by smelling and appropriately commenting on them: peppers, carrots, potatoes, cheese, pie, tea.

You have only recently come from a small town where you were accustomed to everything in well-kept order, free of questionable odors. You are riding on the city subway and become conscious of a pomaded youth, a woman with a suspicious smelling package, a nearby breath that is rich with garlic, a gross, unkempt individual who seems to be trying to encourage a conversation. React differently and appropriately to each stimulus.

Impersonate a grumpy person sitting down to eat a meal. Smell everything before taking a portion or rejecting it. Imagine and react to definite foods.

### *Improvising Mental and Emotional Responses*

Imagine yourself in a canoe which leaks. Using fear as a basic emotion, project timidity, hesitation, disappointment, indignation, anger, incredulity as aspects of your central fear. Your companion has lost the paddle. Work out an emotional gamut which makes use of the foregoing emotions. A suggestion for building this situation: you do not know your companion well—at one stage you come to think he has created this accident as a practical joke.

With pride as the basic characteristic, imagine yourself in the role of someone on the witness stand during a trial. Suppose you saw a husband beat his wife. The lawyer, in cross-examining, insinuates that

your testimony is biased by a liking for the husband or the wife. Build a comedy situation on this. Give emotional reactions which involve wounded dignity, surprise, real shock, aversion, condescension, and triumphant dignity.

Imagine yourself in the role of someone serving a ten year prison term. At the end of a year you are visited by a friendly stranger who has interested himself or herself in your case; he or she thinks your sentence too heavy. Let stubbornness be your basic characteristic. As the stranger tries to be encouraging, respond with these emotional colors: hopelessness, sullenness, shame, hope, fear, wonder, belief. Fashion these into a spoken, rising emotional pattern.

Describe the furnishings of a room in your home: (a) as dryly, factually and monotonously as possible; (b) again factually, but this time have a care for your phrases and be sure that all word relationships are properly highlighted; (c) describe it emotionally—suggesting something of its charm, coziness, those who generally occupy it, some anecdote which you associate with the room—and which raises your emotional description to the point of interesting suspense.

Describe, factually, some person you often see but have never met. Describe this person emotionally, suggesting all sorts of interesting possibilities about them.

You have just arrived at the most important supper dance of the year. Meet a friend in the lounge and tell him or her all of the things which stood in the way of your arrival, how you had to make your dress or fix the car, how the family reacted to your efforts, how a friend called, how often the telephone rang, how you had to postpone a business engagement, of the things you mislaid, how you offended a friend on the way because you drove past and pretended not to see him out of fear that you would be further delayed.

Tell the above (a) as a frivolous girl or empty-headed boy, (b) as it might be told by a tense, unimaginative person, (c) as a jovial, good-natured person, (d) as a flip, vicious individual.

Fit together the external suggestions of a nervous young person applying for a position as a clerk. Sit in the outside office and make friends with the information girl. Use a reasonable amount of characteristic movement. Talk to her in character—regulating tempo, tone, intonation, and diction.

Fit together a picture suggesting a shy student, a swaggering braggart, a sly creature, a hearty Westerner, a dry, precise person. In the character of one of these approach the ticket window of a New York theatre. Enter into argument with the box-office man over the seats he offers. Find a reason for turning down seat locations for three different nights. Let the discussion grow personal but *keep it in character*.

## CHARACTERIZATION

*Character Arrangement*

Every art form excludes or modifies whatever does not add to a desired purpose. A painter omits tree, hill or lake if such details conflict with the interpretation he wants to express; nature rarely offers him a scene that is already in complete harmony. An artist must always select and arrange. It is often said that *art is arrangement*.

Characterizations should not be too detailed. Unimportant actions: detailed mannerisms, even when they are true to life, may defeat the impersonation by over-crowding it; conversational side issues should never appear in sketches if there is any danger of diluting concentration on the true theme and action; unrelated bits of stage business may also confuse the spectator and slow the action.

*How to Win Friends* (page 313) is a sketch of a young man trying to develop his personality through inspirational literature. The character can be viewed as carrying his head at a cocky angle, puffing out his chest, swaggering with his elbows, standing with feet truculently apart or as having a confident, crackling voice. A few of these mannerisms help, but if all of them are included the effect is spoiled; the young man will seem a stupid fool and not a character with whom the audience can emphasize. But use of only the suggestive voice and the elbow-swagger is artistry, true selectivity.

*Impersonations are Grounded in Life*

The actor should be strongly influenced by this principle. Impersonations should be worked out in terms that are true to experience, rather than in terms that a gullible audience might accept. *Irish Mother-Love* (page 326) illustrates this. When tested, the sketch brought good audience response because the interpreter based her conception on a living Irish mother, rather than a fictitious concoction. The audience contained few people who could claim to know an Irish mother but all knew that they were witnessing a performance grounded in truth and life. Persuaded of this much, they were simultaneously persuaded by the dialogue and "Irish-isms" that this believable mother was indeed Irish.

When building a characterization an actor often takes a mannerism from one person and an idiosyncrasy from another, always being careful that the entire effect harmonizes. An understanding actor does not take one detail from the behavior of a brute of a man and

another detail from a weak, effeminate one simply for the sake of contrast.\* An actress never borrows the determined voice of one woman and fits it with the honeyed hypocrisy of another, on the plea that the determined woman later does something hypocritical. There are other ways of revealing hypocrisy than through this unnatural matching.

Thus the true actor always remembers that his art is grounded in fundamental and consistent logic and in truth to life. He wins empathic response honestly.

But how is one to deal with a presentation that employs fantasy, satire, caricature? Are not these things unreal and do they not represent considerations that flaunt logic? The writer of fantasy, satire and caricature is simply removing his vehicle a degree or two from reality in order to comment on life more effectively. Thus, in J. M. Barrie's *Peter Pan* the playwright deals with the desire to stay young. That many people passionately desire to stay young is a truth well established, thus Barrie begins his play with a theme that is grounded in truth. He ends the play with the same consistency. Between beginning and end he inserts fantastic action that makes the theme seem all the more real.

### *Characterizations Should Be Vital*

This means that the actor must continually characterize so pithily that an audience may draw sound ideas and implications from his presentation. Art is implicit with meaning. A caricatured sketch by Goya catches the horror of war. A sculptured piece by Rodin catches man in thought—and emphasizes that man differs from other animals largely through this power. A monodrama by Helen Howe satirizes a parasitic society woman—and thus carries an implicit comment. To offer such comments and observations is a major purpose of all art. In doing this the actor strengthens the experience offered to the spectator, and stimulates creative thought and emotion in the audience.

All stage literature, comic or serious, needs to reveal something vital. Every characterization must be presented with insight; the actor must add something revealing to the interpretation of the character. Although an actor might think he had filled his responsibility

\* A burlesqued characterization sometimes deliberately couples such dissimilar traits, but only for the purpose of emphasizing some aspect of character that is grounded in life with painful reality.

by working up a plausible characterization of, say, a pompous man, it is even possible to win empathic response to such a characterization and still fall short of artistic success. The actor should suggest some additional facts about the pompous one. In short, the character should be not merely a pompous type but a specific individual. How is this done? One way would be to reveal the character as pompous on the surface and a bit frightened underneath. An audience likes to see such chinks in the armor.

### *Visualize the Character*

Anticipation of results leads a work of art to proceed consistently and logically to the creation of a foreseen effect. When the artist works haphazardly and completely in the spirit of "pure inspiration" he is ignoring the fact that his art is first of all a craft. The result is usually weak, distorted, implausible or simply not art at all.

In the days of apprenticeship the actor must visualize fully and see his characterizations clearly. He thus develops technical ability and an effective acting method which makes the most of all assets and reduces the prominence of any shortcomings.

The greatest problem in acting is to find the inflection or gesture that suggests a live idea or feeling to the spectator. When the actor finds ways within himself to achieve this he must develop such assets fully. The actor must know himself. When he does and when he applies this knowledge to the contemplation of a complete characterization, a complete result, he is on the road to consistently good impersonations.

A character must always be seen in a rounded view. Has the actor the necessary assets to present this view? He soon finds out if he compares his assets with the demands. If he has them, proceed. Does he lack the assets? If he does he should select other roles to which he can do full justice.

## CHAPTER ELEVEN

### MASTERING A ROLE

"Yet technique remains a means to an end . ." HERBERT J. MULLER

MASTERY BEGINS in the armchair. One selects a play or sketch and reads it over and over until its dramatic pattern is clear. The first point on which understanding must be clear-cut is the author's purpose in writing the material. One must ask: What point is behind all this? Even though the author has obscured his purpose, what is he aiming to accomplish?

Lee Strasberg, director of the Group Theatre, insists that active play rehearsals cannot start until the actors understand the playwright's intention. The interpreter must understand what the play or sketch is about.

If the play is soundly written, reading and rereading will develop all its possibilities. Acquainting one's self with a drama is much like going through an unfamiliar house; after several explorations the most confusing passages soon show a relation to the whole.

Read *Canzonet* (page 319), a dialect monodrama. Here the author aims to show that "when romance knocks at the door, social training is apt to fly out of the window." Marie, the central character, flirts the first time because of youthful curiosity and for the sake of the adventure. The sketch opens as she tells the man she is ashamed. At length, the appearance of a youth on the beach sands reveals that Marie has lapsed again. To Marie, coquetting with an older man is flirting, but the same allurements practiced on a youth simply amount to "being pals."

The plot of the sketch is slight; characterization is needed to make it effective. Here is where many students encounter difficulty. Too often they believe that the only good sketch is the action-full sketch, rather than one which relies on good characterizing for effectiveness. Particularly in sketches which reveal a character-situation (rather than an action-situation) is it necessary to realize not only

that the author has a purpose, but that unless that purpose is understood it is impossible to do justice to the drama.

### *Characterization*

Preparation of a part raises countless questions, but no student who remembers that every stage portrait represents a character whose expressive action and speech begin within will become lost in perplexities.

Remember that nothing "just happens"; everything has its cause and its effect. The character receives the impetus, or motive, and reacts to it. *The art of acting is the art of reacting.* The *reactive sense* is the ability to react to a motive. Focus the reactive sense upon the character and situation. Let mind action be deep and vital, knowing that impression precedes expression; that unless the mind takes strong hold it will be impossible for speech and movement to press out powerful imagery and pantomimic action.

In organizing a mental picture of the character go back into his history and decide what the subject's background was like. Was he raised in the city or the country? Here or abroad? What racial inheritances will he reveal? Is he single and, possibly, careless or carefree? Is he married and carrying mature responsibilities; and if so, how do such responsibilities react on him?

What is his posture? Does his work modify it? How much vitality has he? How does he show it—in movements slow, deliberate, alert, confident, hesitant, nervous? Does he make broad or restrictive gestures; what is revealed by head, shoulders, elbows, hands, hips, knees, and feet?

What does his speech reveal? Is it intonational, loud; does it reveal a high or low standard; what is its pitch; is it monotonous; does it start strong and end weak? It may help to write out a detailed picture of the character.

In *Canzonet* the lines state that Marie considers herself a good girl. But no audience will believe this even though it is true unless they *see* proof. Mere telling means nothing. Characters often say they are good when their actions show them to be evil. The old adage, "actions speak louder than words," always has significance in dramatic presentations.

To show a character for what he or she is, the interpreter must introduce more evidence than is written in the sketch. This is the

point where characterization really begins. Note how characterization brings the scene of *Canzonet* to life:

(Marie, in a well-bred voice, after recovering from her confusion at sight of the approaching man): "Helen, my little one, while Marie talks with this man you will not go near the water? (Quizzically) You understand? (Smile) Then fly away. And do not get dirty. (With appropriate motion) Shoo!

(Embarrassed) "Good morning to you, too, Monsieur Carver. (Looks away, speaks naively) And now that I have exchanged courtesies with you, please go away. (With a charming shake of the head as she catches his expression) No, no, M'sieur—do not give me the flashing, debonair smile—nor again an invitation to stroll by the rocks. (Hanging her head) I do not forget what happened there yesterday. (Facing him resolutely) It is why I am angry with you."

All the cues supplied above furnish a consistent pattern of character. For example, it would not be in character for Marie to address the child impatiently. This is her first opportunity to show her innate sweetness. Nor would the tone of a well-bred girl be rude when responding to a man she has previously encouraged. Again, she hangs her head at recollection of her "shame."

There is nothing mysterious about characterization. The reactive sense must be brought to bear. Imagination must be wooed. Impersonative bits must be examined mentally to be sure that they are not inconsistent. The recommendations offered under impersonating need to be employed—voice, body, facial expression and gesture must unite to develop a picture of the character's dominant aspect.

### *Improvising before Memorizing*

Having a clear idea of what the material seeks to offer, the next step is to recall the situation and go through it, making up lines. Sometimes it is helpful to impersonate the imaginary character and, in this role, respond with improvised lines and action to whatever is the counterpart of the real character's role. This practice helps to set character details clearly in mind. One determines upon the basic qualities of the character and, whether the approach be subjective or objective, establishes many fundamental points. Before leaving improvisation one should have definite ideas about the character's background, education, philosophy, peculiarities of thought, external mannerisms, and a knowledge of the living conditions and close relatives, friends and enemies of the character. All this supplies motivating material for the character's acts. It gives the interpreter confidence

that the characterization has been soundly prepared—and this shows in future rehearsal and audience presentation.

### *Dialogue, Action*

A drama develops through a series of small points called sequences. A sequence is a sense-group dealing with related points. Here is a sequence:

"Boy! *Today's* gonna be another hot *one!* Phew! Ain't no *sense* gettin' up at *nine* o'clock to bust a lung yellin' to a mob o' *kids*. Believe it or not, Joe, this is my last season *ballyhoo*in' in any two bit gyp of a *sideshow*. When the season closes *I'm* goin' to the big town and try *another racket*. I'm *fed up* playin' honky-tonks. (Looks up) Hey! Look at the big parade comin' in."

This is the opening of Clay Franklin's sketch, *Honky-Tonk Parade*.<sup>\*</sup> The Barker's mood is bitter. He utters several remarks which reveal his mood. This sequence breaks at the cue (looks up). The start of the next sequence is signified by the line: "Hey! Look at the big parade comin' in."

Whenever a sketch advances to a new sequence a transition takes place. There is a change from one aspect to another. *Give every transition an ictus* (stress, accent). The interpreter must give a definite reaction that provides a lift for the new sequence. The ictus may be supplied by movement or sound.

Give strict attention to sense-groups. Everything within a sequence must be examined for its contribution to clearness, motivation and plausibility. If this is done, and if transitions are marked by reactions and emotional shifts, the actor will deal ably with his material.

A good drama has no excess lines. Because of this every speech and every movement count. The interpreter can check accurately whether or not he is extracting every speech and movement value from the play or sketch by the six questions which a journalistic story must answer: Who? what? when? where? why? how? Asking these six key questions throws all possible light upon interpretation of dramatic literature.

Compare these questions with the italicized words in the *Honky-Tonk Parade*. Note that the key idea of each sentence has been italicized. Where a key idea has another word in the sentence which intensifies it, that word has also been emphasized. "Today" is

<sup>\*</sup> Clay Franklin, *These Mortals Among Us*. Samuel French, 1936.

the main thought in the first speech and it is intensified by "hot." In the second sentence, by asking "what time?" it is seen that the "nine" o'clock hour makes the Barker grumble, and the intensifying words are "sense" and "kids."

First, what is the main idea in a sentence? Next, what word intensifies that idea?

It is particularly necessary to be sure that movement is as enlightening as possible. Speech carries so much weight that, whenever possible, expressive movement should divide or shoulder the burden. Movement characterizes and offers a kind of visual grammar. The student who plans to deliver *Honky-Tonk Parade* and who has mastered the antecedents of the Barker will use movement in such fashion. Before the opening line—"Boy! Today's gonna be another hot one! Phew!"—he may glance up at the weather, scowl, wipe perspiration from his face, finally stretch, as one just up from a hard bed, and then speak the line.

Such a type of action is in truth "visual speech." It plainly introduces the character, tells the time and kind of day and indicates the character's mood, all before actual dialogue is used. *Movement can give such powerful ictus to physical and mental reactions, mood, or intentions, that actual speech becomes mere vocal confirmation of a meaning already conveyed.*

### *Pointers for Mastering a Role*

*First*, carefully read the material as a whole, analyze all vague words. Clarify the idea or purpose of the article or play as far as possible.

*Second*, (this step concerns subjective material) imagine the person you are representing. What composes his or her character, i.e.: age, nature, position in life, purpose in the play, connection to other characters? Discover the character's *reasons* for reacting in the manner he does, not only in situations but also in his attitude toward the other characters.

*Third*, separate each thought mentally or, better still, by drawing vertical lines, for example: He is an old man | but he is very nice.

*Fourth*, underline basic words (words that carry the meaning and must be heard) mentally or by drawing a line beneath

those words, for example: He is an old man | but he is very nice.

*Fifth*, alienate yourself from the character or speaker and imagine that he is saying those words and you are the witness. Ask yourself: How would I like to have him say it?

*Sixth*, practice saying the words over and over in this manner until you have absorbed them.

*Seventh*, any words that are not remembered may be looked up and memorized.

### *Pitfalls Encountered in Rehearsing*

Once the material is understood and the lines have been learned, there will be a letdown. The presentation will seem stale; the diction will become blurred. These dangers confront every speaker and actor. They can be remedied by remembering that one thought must come at a time. *Never anticipate the next thought.*

## CHAPTER TWELVE

### THE ACTOR'S NOTEBOOK

"The actor must be ever alert for the specific instance in generalizations" ANONYMOUS

1. ACTING, as an art form, is becoming emancipated from the dogmas of the past. Hence a greater stress is laid on improvisation. In the old days things were done according to formula, even to the planning of gestures—front, lateral, supine. Today the actor is expected to work out his own uninhibited patterns of expression. Therefore, to make best use of improvisation in mastering a role, the channels of expression must be free. Expression moves from within to without. The actor trusts his inner processes instead of relying upon formula. The inner processes must be trained to the point where they are trustworthy.

#### *The Actor Develops Five New Senses*

2. (a) THE MIGRATORY SENSE An actor must be flexible enough mentally to do or imagine himself anything and everything: a stick of wood, a rock, a wind blowing through the night. His power of visualization must be flexible. To train one's powers successfully toward this end the individual must search for the essential nature of that which he wants to suggest or portray. Thus, strongly to characterize the reptilian qualities of a character the actor must be prepared, through observation, to imitate the writhings of a snake. An actress whose duty it is to recreate a feline type of woman is best prepared to do so after having observed and practiced the sinuous, graceful, stealthy movements of a cat.

Hence, every situation and person and object is of interest to the actor. It is necessary to develop insight into the feelings and thoughts of other people. In order completely to capture and understand their sensations, their experiences, their reactions, their thought activity, the actor is constantly reaching out of himself and sampling the experience of others. He is a constant traveler—moving out of his own consciousness and visiting the consciousness of

the people around him. With long training he instinctively projects his mentality whenever he beholds or contacts an interesting type. In this way he develops his migratory faculties.

3. (b) **THE TRANSCURSIVE SENSE.** A sense of proportion implies some standard by which to measure. The actor's standard is the audience. He knows he must so proportion his acting that it will project with proper effectiveness to the audience. For this reason he never plays shy, weak, or timid roles in a manner that is negative, ineffective, and confused—though the proper portrayal of a role might seem to call for such acting. Nor does the actor characterize a careless person with such abandon that his own acting becomes careless and slipshod. The actor must maintain his sense of proportion. He may subdue the force of his gestures and the strength of his voice, and he may speak shyly and gesture in apparent weakness; but, underneath it all, the intelligence should estimate how effectively the portrayal is being projected to the audience. This is the faculty of self appraisal. It is called the transcurative sense.

The transcurative sense is the power of projecting self into the audience and seeing one's self as the audience does. Transcurative means passing beyond or over. The actor must form the habit of watching himself as the audience sees him. The average individual is oblivious, unaware, of the reactions of other people toward him. This is especially true in voice and diction. It does not apply to appearance, since the actor can look in a mirror and see his actions. But, he cannot hear his own voice without practiced self observation. Learn to measure objectively, detachedly, everything said or done for projective purposes; adopt the viewpoint of the listener, the onlooker.

4. (c) **THE INITIATORY SENSE** is used for what William Gillette called "creating the illusion of the first time." The fiftieth performance or rehearsal must seem as fresh and spontaneous as the first performance. Concentration is the chief means toward this end. When the actor has his attention completely focused upon the thing at hand it means that he is absorbing a deep impression of it and that, consequently, he is visualizing with power. To visualize with power implies a rich inflow, always the first step before recreating with effectiveness. Thus, establishing the right measure of inflow and outflow guarantees maintenance of illusion that the actor is initiating an idea, feeling, word, or action, for the first time. This

sense must be active continually—during rehearsal periods as well as during actual performance. The actor must bring to each performance a fresh viewpoint and interest. He must avoid memorized or stereotyped movements or expressions. His performance must always seem fresh and new. His success depends upon this instinctive newness in everything he says or does. Hence, the faculty of initiation develops into an extra sense.

5. SPONTANEOUS THOUGHT BUILDS SPONTANEOUS ACTION. Effective speech and movement follow the spontaneity of thought. Human thoughts are elusive; they come from unexpected directions and with constantly varying intensities and colors. Thus, spontaneous thought stimulates speech and physical actions that are likewise spontaneous, whimsical, unexpected, and varied. In portraying a character the actor must appear to be spontaneous even though he may have studied his role intensively. The surprise element of thought and action keeps the onlooker intent, and it constitutes enjoyment.

6. (d) THE REACTIVE SENSE. The actor must seek a motive for every experience projected in the drama. Nothing should be taken as existing of and by itself; everything is the outgrowth of that which precedes it. The scene that is depicted on the stage and which takes from five to forty-five minutes, must be so interpreted that the audience thinks of it as but a short moment of a continuous life which has had a previous existence and which continues after the scene is completed. Every line that the actor speaks must sound as if it were provoked, rather than invented, either by the actor's thought, or by some other character's thought, or by a condition other than itself.

*The art of acting is the art of reacting.* Every dramatic vehicle is so organized that the motivation for every important speech and action is either explained or can be inferred from revelations made by the characters. The actor should find every word of his part soundly motivated either through plot organization or through introduction of other characters with whom he associates himself in the dramatic vehicle.

Portrayal of a role never proceeds haphazardly; always there is sound motivation. This means that the actor is always reacting to motivation supplied either through plot or other characters. If a character is angry, some other character has made him so. If he crosses a room it is because there is a reason: something has made

him curious, tense, or nervous; or perhaps he seeks a light for his cigarette. In every case speech and movement is the result of a cause; it is the response to something that called forth action. Thus the art of acting is the art of reacting.

7. (e) THE MIMETIC SENSE. *Mimesis*, according to Aristotle, is the outpicturing of man's state of mind. Whether he realizes it or not, each man carries in his body the results of his mental activity; for the body is an instrument of the mind. The body expresses the thoughts and emotions which take place within. For example, a man who is well pleased with himself and with life, and who has felt that attitude of satisfaction for many years, will form facial expressions and bodily tensions that suggest and shape the lineaments of a genial, happy, contented individual. Such a person is recognized by his outpictured contentment, by his expression, the way he carries himself. In short, his body responds *mimetically* to the image of life that he constantly visualizes. Now in acting, every thought and mood—however fleeting—to have any expression value, must be mimetically represented. It must have a visible appearance in the behavior of the actor. The failure to realize the importance of a mimetic sense and a flexible, plastic, physical mechanism that expresses states of mind brings instant penalties. The result is a style of acting that colors every role alike and is commonly called "type" acting.

### *In the Actor's Mind, Thoughts Are Things*

8. THREE ASPECTS OF THE ACTOR'S TRAINING. (a) Absorbing experiences, (b) mental discipline, (c) developing techniques of expression. Absorption represents the *cause* or origin of experience, source, inspiration, idea, conception. Mental discipline represents a formative stage between the inflow and outflow of experience. During this stage ideas are fertilized, focused, and directed along the proper channels of mental and specialized physical activity. Technique is the *effect* of all expressional training. It represents the forms through which expression reveals itself.

Absorption involves intelligence; through it one acquires a knowledge and conception of a characterization or role. After information or experience is absorbed it is digested through the mental processes. Mental activity is the force that stimulates and directs the outpicturing of that which has been absorbed. Technique is involved in expression itself; through it the absorbed concepts, enriched by ma-

ture thought, are revealed in appropriate outward forms. These three aspects of an actor's training encompass every phase of activity in the analysis of character, mastery and interpretation of a role. Remember them as absorption, assimilation (digestion), and expression.

9. DEVELOPING POISE. The actor's poise is a balance between inflow and outflow, between impression and expression. The actor knows that a rich impression is always a first requisite to able projection. It is his responsibility to explore the various aspects of an idea—an emotion—a physical action—a line of dialogue—a characterization—an entire sketch or play. The broader and richer a given concept becomes, the more self assurance the actor develops. The foundation of poise is knowledge.

Poise also implies proper assimilation. This means the actor may permit himself no bias, prejudice, intolerance. Truth can never be digested properly if preconceived ideas interfere. It is possible to have an alert mind, capable of absorbing rich concepts, and yet to fail to assimilate new ideas. The factors which check proper assimilation include: (a) a personal dislike for a truth exhibited in a sketch or play; (b) an innate aversion toward the type of character the actor is called on to portray, as when some intellectually inclined students are required to play an emotional role, or when an attractive student is asked to play a part characterizing a form of ugliness, or when the actor is asked to play a small part where the preference is for some more important role; (c) when stage facilities seem inadequate; (d) when the actor's concept is broadened by a director or fellow-actor with whom he feels lack of sympathy.

The third step in securing poise is acquiring techniques or control over the instruments which permit external expression of the inner concepts which have been digested and are ready for projection. Thus, the actor must know how to gain all kinds of effects with his voice—through recreating various speech standards, timbres, intonational patterns, pauses, and stresses; he must know all the inferences which can be expressed through gestures of the head, face, shoulders, elbows, hands, fingers, torso, knees, and feet. In short, technical mastery of expression is needed. Only when these three stages have been equally developed, and when balanced inflow of impression is polarized (contrasted) with outflowing expression, has the actor secured poise.

10. ACTING IS THREE DIMENSIONAL. The actor's personal equip-

ment is (a) the spoken word, (b) the physical action, (c) mind action—which is often lacking. The mind is always active; the actor's mind must, therefore, always be focused upon some condition pertaining to the characterization. He must constantly be thinking about his part, even though he is not feeling it. If the actor is constantly thinking his part his actions will automatically outpicture his state of mind.

True application of technique leaves no room for any activity that is not under the actor's control. Moreover, since an actor's every movement is designed to express the dramatic aim, no single moment on the stage can ever proceed without purpose. This means that the actor is consistently intent upon responding to motivation furnished by the literature being interpreted. This concentration upon revealing dramatic intent can proceed only through constant application of mental activity. Thus *a picture of a man acting is a picture of a man thinking*. This is the third dimension of acting. To neglect this factor is to make expression shallow, superficial, and unconvincing. The actor always relates the action to its underlying thought. Axiom: Don't think about what you are but be what you think.

### *Does the Actor Ever Live His Part?*

11. ACTING IS AN INSIDE JOB. The actor carries with him an instrument through which he expresses his art. This instrument is composed of the breathing apparatus, vocal and speech organs, certain muscles and bones and ligaments that support posture and movement, facial tensions, etc. But this same equipment must also sustain the actor's personal life processes that go on within his body. Thus, besides using his body to act, he must use his body to live. This means that the requirements of role must not involve the deeper, vital functions of the actor's body. An actor, even in a fit of passion on the stage, must remain mentally cool, alert, well poised, and entirely self controlled throughout his performance. The audience may weep or snarl, but the actor, inwardly, must be serene. He who portrays an emotion realistically, by allowing himself to feel that emotion while he is expressing it, likewise allows his body to wear down violently under the strain of that emotion. Several minutes of such emotional realism would leave the actor hoarse, breathless, spent, and unfit for the next sequence or scene. The actor can never live his part, since he must reserve his vital functions

for the more important processes of controlling his techniques of expression. His body and mind are vehicles of artistic expression, but such vehicles must be maintained with poise and self control, with flexibility and freedom. When the actor *lives* the part he is being *himself* and not the character in the play.

Although it is true that many people live on an emotional level and spend their time in feeling emotional reactions, and although it is true that many others live upon a physical plane where their main contact with life is through sensory impressions, the actor cannot afford to risk his self control by allowing himself to be carried away by any emotion when he presents such types. He must remain upon a mental level and fuse the three systems of communication—thought, emotion, sensation—into mind action, which is always in supreme control of the interpretation of every role.

12. THE ACTOR LIVES IN A WORLD OF ILLUSION. He deals with the theatre in terms of what it seems, rather than in terms of what it is. The medium of theatric art is one of pure illusion; it is a synthesis artistically welded in a sequence intended to produce the desired impression on the onlooker. Theatric art is never realistic; it is always impressionistic; it deals with impressions rather than with real experience. Compare the realism of the bull fighting arena with a stage duel. People may actually be killed in the bull fighting arena, but on the stage the duelist after he has "killed" his opponent greets him off-stage and they chat together.

13. NATURALISM ON THE STAGE IS AS BAD AS ARTIFICIALITY IN REAL LIFE. The stage picture is never commonplace. It must always appeal to the interest. Hence, even ordinary happenings must be properly weighted and balanced so as to convey special meaning to the audience. The actor must constantly intensify. He must think more vigorously, simulate deeper feeling, project his voice farther, and expand his actions more broadly than is called for in life. Hence, the actor does not reveal his own true nature but that of the character he is portraying. The actor deals in extensions, extravagancies. But, although he is a spendthrift on the surface, he always gets an excellent return upon his spending; he receives assurance that the audience has been able to pass upon and accept all that he has offered.

#### *Hints on Interpretation and Character Analysis*

14. DRAMATIC INTERPRETATION IS A BY-PRODUCT OF UNDERSTANDING. For this reason interpretation is a result, not a cause. When

the actor knows what he is talking about interpretation takes care of itself.

15. INJECTING LIFE INTO ILLUSION. The paradox of acting is that its most important element is not the thing said or done but the implications of the thing uttered or the action performed. Every word and deed contains an *explicit* or literal meaning, and an *implicit* meaning; and the latter is more important. Thus, if a new character enters a room the audience is well aware that he will offer a conventional greeting. When he says, "Hello, John," or "Mary," his explicit intention is to extend a recognition to the room's occupant. But what tone does he employ in speaking? Is he surly? light-hearted? wary? crude? What are the *implications* of this explicit utterance? These are the things an audience watches to discover and listens to hear. Again, everybody walks into a room on two legs; this is common behavior. But, in addition, everyone has a special and individual way of walking—not only into a room, but in walking everywhere. What are the *implications* of the individual's way of doing? Is he timid? graceful? dynamic? ordinary? sly? All these things are implicit in the actions of individuals. It is the actor's responsibility to see to it that his characterizations are rich with such implicit values. Explicit statements always present the "letter of the law" but the implicit expression conveys more of the "spirit of the law." So it is with acting: "The letter (literal sense) killeth, but the spirit (implied meaning) giveth life."

16. PRACTICING ORIGINALITY. The work of the actor who develops skill in original portrayal—being different and having resources at his command that make possible unique expression—is relished most keenly and lives longest in the imagination of the audience. Everyone tends to forget the commonplace experiences of life. When an individual reflects upon the past, his memory bounds from this incident to that incident only because such happenings represent monuments of experience. The humdrum routine of a clock-like existence is soon forgotten when some changing and sensational circumstance competes with it for recollection.

The actor is really a student of originality. He is constantly alert to novel experiences and expressions, remembering and capturing the original element in every circumstance that he contacts in life.

17. AVOID THE OBVIOUS. Avoid that which can too easily be anticipated by the audience. Such an anticipated effect, or series of

effects, dulls interest because it is expected. Certain rhythms are used in lullabies to produce sleep because the regular, anticipated pattern never changes; consequently it does not quicken interest or keep the mind alert. Again, it is not the anticipated presence of stars shining in the heavens at night which draws attention skyward; it is the unusual "shooting star." Even change can become monotonous if it is anticipated completely. Movement on the stage, as well as speech, must be a variegated pattern full of unexpected changes in its delivery.

18. VARIETY VERSUS MONOTONY. Anticipation, surprise, and novelty are elements of interest. The actor deals in four kinds of interest. These might be represented on a graph by lines that were (a) flat or *passive*, (b) *rhythmical* with repetitive rise and fall, (c) representative of *sustained* height, or a plateau, (d) a suddenly rising peak or *climax*.

Every good dramatic vehicle should express in its physical action and emotional content, as well as in plot progression, one or more of four interest values: passive, rhythmic, sustained, climactic. The best form of entertainment is one in which these values are well distributed to provide variety of interest—not too much of one type. Too much novelty can become tiresome just as can too little novelty. Moments of relief from great excitement, tension, or suspense, must be provided to relax the onlooker if the next climax is to have its true effect.

Hence, *passive* interest is used to relax or relieve tension. This type of interest is provided by comedy bits, characterizing business, or atmosphere—things which relate to the vehicle but which provide relaxation.

*Rhythmical*, repetitive interest is a contrasting activity in which two opposite characters or events play against each other so that each, in turn, competes for audience attention, thereby causing rhythmical interest as the audience turns from one to the other.

The act of building suspense provides a plateau of *sustained* interest along which audience attention rides.

*Climax* is a peak of maximum interest; it is highly charged and explosive.

19. SILENCE SPEAKS LOUDER THAN WORDS. The actor makes implicit use of silence as a deliberate means to an end, securing effect that builds audience interest. The force of the withheld action and the suspense of the unspoken word are two of the greatest armaments

in the arsenal of the actor. Silence must always be *implicit* with meaning; it must be rich in the spirit of the moment. Thus, when an unscrupulous enemy forces a character into a fateful act, the silence which precedes that act may be terrifying in its intensity. Such silence, judiciously used, speaks louder than words.

20. NEW IDEAS MAKE THEIR WAY OVER THE BODIES OF THE OLD. Every new idea needs a cutting edge, an *ictus*. (*Ictus* means stress, accent.) Every fresh sentence, every fresh speech, every new idea, every important action, every contrasting element must have an *ictus*. When the actor presents new ideas he has to overcome the mental inertia of the audience because the collective attention is always occupied with the previous experiences at that moment when it is asked to admit a new one. The actor best arrests attention by using a cutting edge, an emphasis, an *ictus*, in each new idea.

21. STAGE BUSINESS may (a) enhance a characterization, (b) throw a character into juxtaposition with other characters, (c) bring out the meaning of the plot, (d) clear exits and entrances, (e) place a character in properly lighted areas.

In planning a bit of business the actor should try to accentuate whatever he does by presenting its opposite either before it or after it, or both. When the actor wants to wheel suddenly to the right and snarl he must be sure that in the preceding action he has turned toward the left. If he plans a vocal inflection for a climax that is rather high, he anticipates that point by keeping the voice fairly low while approaching it, thus affording a contrast. Similarly, an explosive utterance should always be followed by a trenchant pause; that is, a weighty silence which contrasts with the vocal climax just uttered.

22. OVERSTATEMENT AND UNDERSTATEMENT. The singer develops a higher voice range than she needs, the dancer learns to kick higher than necessary. During rehearsal the actor should similarly overbuild each moment of the performance by exaggeration, overacting, overstatement, intensification, and *ictus*. Proceed, then, to soften, blend, and smooth out the hard tones and edges. The actor must think more, feel more, express more during rehearsal than is actually needed. From these extremes he recedes. But, in the beginning he needs more "material," so to speak, than he can use. Subtlety derives from exaggeration; understatement from overstatement. Understatement cannot be convincing to the audience unless the actor carries in his mind an image of the full expression that he

is trying to restrain or understate. This mental concept can best be developed by practicing overstatement during the rehearsal period.

23. UNDERSTATEMENT IS A USEFUL DRAMATIC DEVICE. An actor who comes on stage and simply rushes about, engages in meaningless movement. If those movements are given form, if, for example, the character organizes his rushing about so that it assumes the pattern of a frenzied hunt for something, then purposeful action results. Stage action must always be purposeful. But the most purposeful action does not necessarily imply external or visible movement. For example, a mother may hear a tragic report about her son and she may remain fixed and motionless as she receives the news. But her expression reveals inner turmoil, she may, by her very rigidity, build a more dramatic and intensive *implied* action-picture.

24. CHARACTER ANALYSIS. The best method of character analysis is to determine wherein the character differs from every other human being, rather than how he conforms to this or that type. The outlines of character are easily studied in some of the sketches of a literary artist such as Dickens. His characters live in the imagination by virtue of their uniqueness rather than because they are common types met with in everyday affairs. Study Mr. Micawber, Jerry Cruncher, Mrs. Gumidge, Betsie Trotwood.

In analyzing character: (1) determine the state of the subject's consciousness, (2) establish a sympathetic understanding with that consciousness—as if you were that character yourself, (3) visualize the routine activities and behavior of that consciousness, (4) recreate it.

Character portrayal is, in a sense, like a fine etching in which each line, however delicate or gross, serves a useful purpose in conveying the image, and no line is superfluous in the final printing of the image. Economy of effort is important in the activity of the stage. The true artist dismisses superfluities. The actor utilizes essential details of character that serve specific purposes of characterization. Compare economy of expression in acting with any of the other arts. True *economy in expression* and *simplicity* are perhaps the key notes of the greatest portraitures on the stage.

25. NINE FACTORS ARE INVOLVED IN MASTERING TECHNIQUE OF ACTING: (1) the actor must be thoroughly self disciplined or self controlled at all times. (2) his powers of concentration must always be keyed high. (3) he needs training in habitualizing responses so that they are immediate, reflex, and sure. This may be called

"grooving the channels of the mind" or learning to direct each thought into its proper expressional activity for purposes of projection. (4) the actor needs a trained memory to absorb experience, record it, and recall it when needed. (5) he needs the ability to visualize keenly the part he intends to portray. (6) he must have an understanding of how to analyze a character for purposes of study. (7) he must know how to synthesize or create an *original* stage character out of all the factors of his experience in observing and analyzing character types. (8) the final interpretation of a role involving character analysis requires good understanding of the entire dramatic structure of the play, sketch, or story, as it is applied to and interpreted in his part. (9) he must have the capacity to translate this knowledge of what the entire dramatic structure means into visible and audible forms of expression; that is, he must be able to *project* his part so that it is intelligible to his audience.

### *Controlling An Audience*

26. WAIT FOR YOUR AUDIENCE. A rising curtain serves to draw off the thousand and one concerns and interests which fill the minds of an assembled audience. The process of audience adjustment and focus is not a split-second procedure, however; the actor must allow a little time to pass before beginning to speak. He must allow the atmosphere to become weighted by a growing sense of curiosity and suspense. By so doing he begins every performance with an ictus, an emphasis. The rising of the curtain in itself provides an ictus to the attention. That ictus is enhanced by a five second pause after the curtain has been withdrawn before the vital action of the play begins.

27. STAGE PRESENCE. The art of acting is essentially an art of communication; the factors in the art depend upon communicability for their completeness. Stage presence is the ability to communicate adequately and effectively that which the artist conceives to a listening audience. It is a term used to suggest the efficiency of communication. For example, a woman chatting over the telephone does not start to speak until she hears the voice at the other end of the wire. And at certain intervals she waits for a word of assurance or approval or understanding from the other party. She does not complete her side of the conversation heedless of whether it is being listened to or not; in fact, over the telephone she will stop what she is saying and ring for the operator if there are line

noises or an uncertain connection or an accidental interruption in service.

Yet, upon the stage, one often observes actors who continue to speak and move—even though what they are saying and doing is unintelligible to the audience. Acting involves an audience-speaker relationship. The awareness of this relationship (testing at every moment the reaction of the onlooker) is summed up in the term *stage presence*. The term applies to the peculiar adaptability of the actor to the requirements of the stage. Stage presence comes through mastery of the technique which brings acting to its most effective expression.

28. DOMINATING THE SCENE AND THE AUDIENCE. The actor may never allow his audience to forget that he is in control. The instant an audience stops listening interestedly, it begins to think critically and observe objectively. This must not be permitted to happen even for an instant. The audience must be held in a state of subjective *empathy*. Empathy may be defined as identification with the situation in the play through sympathetic mental, emotional, and physical response. It is the actor's aim to project his role with such a continuous display of intensity, enthusiasm, and mind action that the audience feels "at one" with the presentation from start to finish; they are held enthralled. They mentally participate in the play *in empathy* with it, and show unconscious physical and emotional reactions to the stage action. Such responses are called empathic reactions. The actor should aim to induce them in all his listeners.

29. ENJOYMENT OF ACTOR AND AUDIENCE. In the final analysis the greatest ingredient which the actor adds to a presentation is enjoyment. Good theatre is good enjoyment. Enjoyment by the actor himself is the best requisite for promoting a similar reaction in the audience. True entertainment in the theatre is an activity that establishes a relationship between audience and actor. Neither can participate in this relationship without the cooperation of the other. True enjoyment by the audience is a natural result of keen enjoyment in the actor while he is doing his part. Only when the audience is held by the binding spell of an inspired performance does the theatrical entertainment attain its true fulfilment. In this stage of audience enjoyment there is complete oblivion to the outside world as the onlooker participates in the play through his imagination and his feelings (empathy). The formula for establishing a perfect actor-

audience relationship may be stated as follows: (1) enjoyment of the actor in the part he plays; (2) participation of the audience; (3) oblivion of the audience to anything but the play. The result makes for good theatre. The successful actor will try to visualize his part not only as he sees himself in it but also with his transcursive sense, or as the audience will see it.



## PART II

### MONO-THEATRE—MATERIALS AND TECHNIQUES



## CHAPTER THIRTEEN

### THE MONO-THEATRE

"A great artist can paint a great picture on a small canvass"  
C. D. WARNER

SOLO ACTING has been a vital dramatic force for thousands of years. The first form was story telling. Men of early tribes gripped audiences with imaginative tales, thus laying the groundwork for a technique which finally assumed the complicated form known today as "legitimate" theatre.

Story telling eventually included impersonation of story characters, hence the emergence of imitators and impersonators. Later, impersonation took the form of short dramatic sketches which the Greeks called monologues. (Monologue: *mono*—"one"; *logos*—"to speak.") About 500 B.C. a step of dramatic importance was taken: Thespis added an actor to the dithyramb or Greek Chorus. He observed that the odes sung in the dithyramb were often descriptive and narratively exciting. It was his idea personally to act out the most dramatic scenes and simply use the chorus to provide story links. Thus was created "dramatic action."

In 600 A.D. the Lombards descended on Rome and wiped out the group theatre. For the next several hundred years dramatic art was in the hands of the solo actor, known variously as: narrator, fableor, conteor, gestour, disour, segger, bard, minstrel. He traveled all over Europe offering dits, debats, parades, imitations, impersonations, stories, sketches and dramatized songs.

By 1500 A.D. the Miracle and Morality play had so firmly established interest in group acting and in the larger dramatic action that there was a public demand for more and more such entertainment. Finally laymen began to compete with the Church and Guild; the theatre began to use more "earthly" subject matter. The laymen, moreover, had the wit to recruit minstrels as actors, instead of relying upon bumpkins and poorly trained townspeople. The skilled minstrels had learned the actor's art from their solo entertainments

and from a sort of playlet called Interlude. Their professional skill lured the public in droves. By the time of Shakespeare and Marlowe the theatre had become commercial.

This outline is too short to trace the really interesting history of solo acting, but it is enough to suggest that this art, through Thespis, was responsible for the establishing of what has become our legitimate theatre. Also, it was the solo actor who kept some form of theatrical entertainment alive for 800 years, until a professional group theatre could again take over. Finally, it was largely through the trained skill of the solo actor that the commercial theatre secured its triumph over Church and Guild monopoly. Had Shakespeare and other Elizabethan playwrights been unable to use an already established commercial theatre, would we have the benefit of their classical masterpieces?

#### *New Terminology for an Old Art*

What of solo acting in our own century? A generation or two ago it was known as "elocution," a term that still survives here and there. But elocution could not hold its place. Apparently developed from a system of gestures, facial expressions and posturings that were first catalogued by an Englishman, named Aaron Hill,\* over a century ago, it represented stylized physical movement and a carefully worked out system of voice shading. It was ridiculed and discarded because it conventionalized and restricted solo acting.

With the outmoding of elocution, oral interpretation was introduced and developed. This method of presentation emphasized speech and ruled out the stiff attitudinizing of the older system. But by this time solo acting had lost more ground as an entertainment medium. Today some teachers of oral interpretation regard it only as a system of teaching and not as a medium of entertainment.

Unquestionably oral interpretation does and will continue to do much for the development of speech. But it must not be permitted to dominate the art of solo acting as a means of entertainment. There is more to expressional development than speech training.\*\* It becomes increasingly clear that there is need of a training method wherein neither speech (as in oral interpretation), nor movement (as in elocution), will be unduly emphasized, but will receive adequate

\* Helen Ormsbee, *Backstage With Actors*, New York, 1938

\*\* See the *Players Magazine*, January 1938, "Convention Comments", the opinions of Constance Welch, Yale University, and Frances Hubbard, University of Southern California.

consideration. But what should such a method be called? From story telling to lecture recital, the seven arts of the solo entertainer have a common feature of presentation: the use of acting technique in sharing dramatic experience with an audience. This use of acting technique suggests the terms "mono-actor" and "mono-theatre." "Mono-theatre" as used in the following chapters is *dramatic forms of entertainment presented by a single interpreter*. Also these forms are synonymous to the forms of declamation.

### *Mono-Theatrical Values*

Solo acting is by no means a substitute for group type of production seen on Broadway and in the little theatre. In the practice materials of solo acting, however, there are several values to be found which are not available in the plays intended for group presentations. Those who seek development through dramatic art will find that solo acting offers the best approach.

Solo acting is highly individual; in it the single actor is responsible for the smooth functioning of every detail of his production, he sets the tone, the tempo, the whole concept of the "dramatic action" that he interprets. Group acting dramatizes the happenings of several interrelated characters. Each performer must therefore key his acting to the tone and tempo of his fellows, otherwise the play is uneven. Also, it is the director who is responsible for the smooth functioning of every detail of the production; he it is who sets the tone, the tempo, the whole concept of the dramatic action.

In mono-acting, individuality of performance makes the dramatic adventure. The ideal play production cannot afford to emphasize individuality.

The various mediums of solo acting are under the complete control of the actor, thus offering full opportunity for experiment in whatever phase of acting technique the individual may need practice; also no special stage equipment is needed; practice can take place in the most informal surroundings. Moreover, solo acting provides best opportunities for the development of such expressional factors as absorption, digestion and expression, and also rhythmic balance in mental activity, speech and movement.

Further there is unparalleled opportunity to practice all technical principles of acting, as: line reading, creation of ictus, use of pause and emphasis, timbre, intonation, stress, pronunciation, pantomime and all others.

Professional solo acting is a popular and highly skilled form of dramatic activity in its own right. The various mediums are:

Story Telling  
Imitation and Impersonation  
Monodrama, Literary Monologue, Soliloquy  
Play Reading  
Musical Reading  
Poetry Portrayal  
Lecture Recital, Lecture Demonstration

The study of the many interpretative techniques of mono-theatre may be undertaken through the following chapters. The student who absorbs the fundamentals of each will greatly increase his skill in creating dramatic illusion for audiences. Thus the student, no matter what his purpose is in studying dramatic art, is urged to practice each of them.

### *Styles of Mono-Acting*

The mono-actor may employ one of two acting styles. The first is called *representational*. Action is carried on as though the fourth wall of the stage room actually were in place and the audience did not exist. (Actually the actor must keep his finger on its pulse in order to maintain proper rhythm and dynamics.) Representational acting is employed in so-called realistic stage productions. But mono-theatre never carries realism as far as does the realistic play production; it would be ridiculous to do so because it requires too much imaginative cooperation from the audience.

In representational mono-acting the stage, although it may be bare of scenery or properties, is to be imagined as the scene of the situation. Further, the audience is frequently asked to imagine that the actor is specially costumed although his clothes are conventional. Finally, the audience is to imagine that two or more people inhabit the stage in conversation with one another—when only one person is visible and all conversations are one-sided. And, while audiences will cheerfully imagine such things when asked, for these details are unimportant, they then sit back and demand that the mono-actor present an empathy-producing characterization.

The second style, *presentational* acting, is more informal. The audience is called into actual participation. For example, the mono-actor may come on stage and announce that he is "a political candidate running for office." The audience, well aware that this is simply

a device for getting a bit of entertainment under way, accepts him at his face value. For several minutes he proceeds to harangue his listeners as though they were part of a political meeting. If he has good material and makes use of it, the audience empathizes and temporarily falls into the spell of believing that the actor is the politician he says he is.

This is intimate acting at its best. Every branch of mono-theatre has material that can be used in this type of presentation—especially monodrama, story telling and musical reading. When the actor is skillful the audience soundly enjoys being addressed directly. It likes active participation.

## CHAPTER FOURTEEN

### WRITING AND ARRANGING MATERIAL FOR MONO-THEATRE

"The theory of art teaches us what ought to be accomplished."

SCHLEGEL

FOR MOST effective selection and adaptation of dramatic material every student should have knowledge of the fundamental rules of creative writing. Furthermore, an understanding of the basic principles of writing is essential for sympathetic and successful interpretation.

The forms of all dramatic writing have a common structure, introduction, development, crisis, and close. The introduction in literature tells enough about characters, time, place and situation to give motion to the author's intentions. But a dramatic vehicle needs further development to grip attention and establish pace. At the climax, the dramatic vehicle reaches its greatest power. The solution, or denouement, for the acute and complicated problem represented by the climax, brings on the close.

#### *Materials for Dramatic Structure*

The primary materials of dramatic structure are plot and character. A situation made up of conflicting or opposing factors developing toward a crisis constitutes plot. The attempt to loosen the complications born of these opposing factors creates the dramatic conflict.

Plot is the path along which the audience is conveyed. In some dramatic sketches the plot is simple and direct; sometimes it is complex and devious. A bare plot is like a walk down an uninteresting city block; a plot of balanced complication is like a winding walk through interesting woodlands.

#### *Illustrating Plot*

Imagine that two Civil War veterans meet upon a street corner. They have been "feuding" with one another ever since they were

mustered out of the Union and Confederate armies. The day they meet is Memorial Day. The thinning ranks of the Blue and the Gray have advanced the two to the position where each has been selected to lead his comrades in the annual parade. Also, each is to make a speech. But it is only during their ensuing squabble that they learn this. They look angrily at each other. Each vows to go home, rather than stand upon the same platform with the other in peace and comradeship.

They stand glaring; when "all is lost," a regiment of Regulars, led by a spirited band, comes marching by. The marchers and the music are infectious. The old men are lost in pride of this colorful, impressive symbol of America's might. They break forth in a spontaneous cheer, then the man in gray catches himself. He has cheered for the "enemy"! But the breakup of the feud cannot now be halted. Emotionally off balance, the two old men then and there shake hands, tears in their eyes, satisfaction in their hearts because the foolish quarrel has been patched up.

Such is a brief résumé of a plausible plot. Note the opposing factors between which harmony is sought. Factor one is the feud of the old men. Factor two is their learning that each is expected to fraternize with the other upon the speaker's platform.

Contrast this with the time, Memorial Day, when friendliness should be the watchword. Factor three is that they should stop fighting a war which has been over so many years. Factor four is that they should adjust foolish differences before they die.

By the time the audience has learned of all these factors a situation has developed which, apparently, cannot be harmonized. And then come the marching Regulars. The emotion which the old men feel breaks down all barriers—the complication has been cut through and a solution has been found. Naturally the plot is at an end.

### *Compare Plot and Characterization*

It is not merely people in a situation which move one's feelings; it is particular individuals—people who have been characterized so well that "they seem like people we know." Give an audience insight into a particular individual's make-up and immediately—so great is the passion for exploring one's fellow-men—the onlookers will enter into the spirit of the portrayal. One feels he knows "just how that fellow feels."

Characterization is so important an element of dramatic literature

that one may write about an old man or woman and proceed to philosophize, perhaps about the sunset, and then let the curtain lower without any attempt at a piece of exciting action of any kind. Yet the result, from an audience point of view, may be completely satisfying. Analysis of this satisfaction would reveal that the audience has been charmed by learning why old people feel a kinship with the setting sun. If the characterization is skillful there is every reason why an audience should enjoy the experience, and that is an aim of all art.

*Characterization is the flesh covering the skeleton of plot.*

### *The Purpose of Introduction*

The introduction of a monodrama may take but a few sentences; that of a one-act play may take a page or even half of the entire play; and in the three-act play most of the first act is devoted to introduction. Short story openings are short.

Introductions are expository. They acquaint audiences with the characters; give important facts about the background; tell enough about situation to whet audience appetite for more. They tell the facts which make the dramatic vehicle clear. But, those facts must be kept identified with interesting action or characterization.

For an example of monodramatic opening, see *How to Win Friends* (page 313). When the young man greets "Mr. Haverstraw," the opening has been completed.

### *The Place of Development*

Development embraces the full body of the drama. "A shadow no larger than a man's hand" grows into a huge cloud which presumably threatens a deluge. The development gives everything which requires amplification up to the point of climax. In the development every scrap of expository information is given which helps audience appreciation of that major moment in the action when events are at their highest pitch.

Right upon the heels of development is climax. It is important to note that this term is not synonymous with "close." An excellent illustration of the most effective place for climax to begin is furnished by three-act plays: climax usually arrives at the end of the second act, leaving another full act for its resolution and the tying together of loose ends. Shorter forms, such as the short story, monologue, and one-act play, often place the climax very near the close.

It is not unusual to have climax come at the very end. The monodramas, *How to Win Friends*, and *Hoot Mrs. Tavish*, (pages 313 and 322) are examples. The value of having climax occur close to the end of brief dramatic forms is that it focuses all possible attention on development, plainly a necessity in shorter mediums.

### *Injecting Suspense*

Suspense is the distance between first knowledge of impending crisis and the final resolution of that crisis. If other factors are developed properly, suspense takes care of itself. Suspense grows with the uncovering of complications and reaches its maximum tension at the moment that climax reaches its peak. But it does not stop there; suspense should not stop until the full cycle of dramatic action has turned. An audience should remain on tenterhooks until the last loose end has been tied.

### *The Responsibility of Resolution and Close*

The function of the resolution and the close is to adjust whatever has been changed or shattered by the climax. Good writing and arranging bring the play or story to an end in proper rhythm with everything accounted for.

### *Individuality and Character*

A person of individuality is one whose inner processes seek expression and find it uniquely, so that behavior is not mere imitation of other people's habits and mannerisms.

Character relates largely to the quality of one's inner fibre; a person of little character has no strong internal cohesiveness and is weak in moral strength, mental assurance and in the maintenance of a program or philosophy of life; whereas someone of great character has moral and mental stability.

Individuality relates to uniqueness or its relative absence, character relates to quality or its relative lack. In writing and arranging material one must have knowledge of a subject's individuality and character; one can, in a sense, be individual with only a superficial character; one can have a deep, interesting character that is hidden so completely that individuality seems to be lacking.

### *Justifying Mood*

Mood is often important. Mood is the aspect of personality that is currently uppermost. It is often necessary to convince an audience

that a given character is justified in feeling a given mood. When an audience knows *why* a character is in a mood it better understands and appreciates that character's subsequent actions. Imagine a scene wherein a young girl expresses active unhappiness. An audience would at once wonder *why*. Perhaps she was not invited to a certain party. A fresh question is automatically raised: why did she want to go to the party? Perhaps to wear a new dress and dazzle all the boys; perhaps because she feels she will lose the attentions of a particular boy if she is not there. If a scene opens with character actively expressing unhappiness the reasons must be made clear—otherwise the situation loses in interest, effectiveness and persuasiveness.

By providing adequate motivation for the moods displayed by characters, a piece of literature lends depth and plausibility to the subjects' actions. This adds emphasis to any emotional changes of a character during progression of the plot. Thus, if the girl receives a last minute, mislaid invitation, an audience will appreciate her happiness much more if it knows why she was originally unhappy.

Mood adds logic and persuasiveness to character, but one must be sure that the reasons for the character's mood are clear to the audience.

### *Creating Atmosphere*

Atmosphere is background. Because every dramatic unfoldment is an adventure in illusion, the actor must help the audience's imagination sustain illusion. This is the province of atmosphere.

Much of atmosphere comes from the characters themselves. It may be created by revelation of important geographic factors. It may grow out of conditions which affect the individual and his community. Suggestions of the psychology and morals of characters may be advanced through dialogue. To understand atmosphere, contrast it with character and mood.

Character informs an audience concerning individuality in its entirety. Mood reflects a particular state of mind and emotion at a specified time. Atmosphere reveals special values or conditions which affect the behavior of the characters.

As an instance, consider a sailor born on water and who has lived on it all his life (characterization). He anxiously paces the floor of a country house, awaiting his host who is now absent upon an errand. He is uneasy over being left alone in such an unfamiliar

place as a house on land (mood). Moreover, this house is on a lonely mountain, nestling under huge rocks—with the added complication that a fierce storm is in progress (atmosphere).

Note that atmosphere is created by the geographic factor of a lonely house on a mountainside, and that a special condition that contributes is the fierce storm. If the sailor should look into the family Bible and see a notice that a relative had committed suicide in this house and was sometimes seen to walk about, atmosphere would be further intensified by a fear motive.

In writing and arranging material it is often necessary to create atmosphere through narration. In monodrama this is done by a well-told description delivered before the curtain. In dramatizing a scene from a story or book, the actual text of the author is often used narratively.

The foregoing few simple considerations should be remembered in the preparation of material.

## CHAPTER FIFTEEN

### STORY TELLING

"No tale so good but may be spoiled in the telling"

GEORGE HERBERT

STORY TELLING makes important use of a conversational speaking voice. Everyone brings this equipment to the art of telling stories, and probably everyone has used it for the description of a thrilling eyewitness account of some incident, the telling of a movie plot or the reciting of a dramatic morsel of gossip. One's possession of such equipment plus some experience in using it suggests that story telling offers a logical beginning in the practice of dramatic art.

Story telling is the structure upon which the actor's art rests. Stories, in structure, are like plays to this extent: both build interest from an introduction, through development, into climax and, hence, to conclusion; and the aim in both instances is to create a rising, pleasurable experience for an audience.

Story telling is practiced on an amateur and professional basis before children and adult audiences. In schools, playgrounds, libraries, camps, museums, public auditoriums, through radio and television, this art is brought to millions.

Some tell their tales directly with little dramatization, but others, especially tellers of adult stories such as Robert Benchley, use a more dramatic style. Sydney Thompson's adult stories are presented quite impersonatively. One may specialize in boys', girls', or adults' stories, Christmas, Negro, or Dickens' stories. All types—imaginative, realistic, comic, satiric, tragic—are popular.

#### *The Anecdote As Story*

The anecdote is the simplest form of story. It (a) deals with a short, pithy experience and (b) has a conventional opening, development, climax, and close. It offers informal opportunities for practice and is a valuable piece of social equipment when learned, for it can be used at home, at parties, at meetings, at school affairs, at dinners,

or at sporting events. Because of its simplicity it is the most easily mastered form of story telling. It should be used as a means of providing one's self with early experience in appearing before audiences—be they no more than the members of the family.



Sydney Thompson in a scene from a Guy de Maupassant story.

In connection with any anecdote, certain questions must be asked in order to make the story one's own. What is the story about? Who is concerned in it? What details must be "planted" in the introduction? How much time must be devoted to the introduction? the development? What is the climax? Upon what does the "punch" line depend for effect? Consider the following example.

*(Opening—Accent names, relationships, time, place, situation.)*

The late Pierpont Morgan was coming to a tea in the home of

Mrs. Dwight L. Morrow, mother of Anne Lindbergh. Little Anne—a child at the time—was to be permitted a glimpse of the famous man. Mrs. Morrow (*Emphasize the “plant,” that is, Mr. Morgan’s nose.*), remembering Morgan’s generous-sized nose, thought it well to take her young daughter aside.

(*Use a suggestive voice tone for Mrs. Morrow.*)

“Anne—If you notice anything unusual about Mr. Morgan, be sure not to speak of it aloud. You understand?” The child seemed to understand.

(*Development begins here. Let the voice raise the question: What will Anne do or say?*)

Finally all the guests had arrived. Anne was brought in and introduced to the great financier. Mrs. Morrow leaned forward tensely. But nothing untoward happened. Out marched little Anne most sedately. (*Here the voice relaxes.*) Relieved, (*Mentally ‘see’ Mrs. Morrow’s actions.*) Mrs. Morrow filled a cup of tea and turned to her distinguished guest. She looked at him brightly. (*Use suggestive voice.*) “Mr. Morgan, will you have cream or lemon in your nose?”

The point of an anecdote rests largely in its pith. It tells much in little. It must assemble and quickly dispose of all introductory facts—names, relationships, time, place, situation. See how these facts have been taken care of in the above introduction. The first paragraph tells the important points. But, when these details have been clearly cared for, an interesting situation is set forth: will Anne embarrass Mr. Morgan with a blunt reference to his nose?

Each sentence of the third paragraph is a masterpiece of mounting suspense. The anecdote teller is able verbally to recreate the scene. *Every good anecdote represents an attempt actually to recreate the scene.* This is vital. Unless teller and listener visualize the scene—the one as he tells it, the other as he listens—the story will fall flat.

Both the lines and the anecdotist’s method must work in harmony for such visualization. If necessary, he must revise the lines so that he can relate them most naturally in the telling. A little practice on a given anecdote will inform the teller as to what revision is necessary.

A degree of characterization helps suggestion. In the above anecdote one can greatly heighten the effect by employing something of a “warning” voice as Mrs. Morrow cautions Anne; also one might suggest the tea-pouring and an almost “cooing” tone when, relieved, she queries Mr. Morgan.

The following recommendations for story telling will be of great value to the anecdotist and they should be studied with such an initial end in view.

- a. Decide what details must be placed in introduction
- b. Decide what are the necessary developmental details.
- c. Be sure to emphasize the "key" to the anecdote.
- d. Secure interest and respect by introducing with a purposeful and intonational lift, the names of characters.
- e. Include as much suggestive impersonation as helps.
- f. Avoid racing through suspense building details.
- g. Relish these details, visualize them, recreate them.
- h. One spoils the anecdote by laughing during its telling.
- i. Avoid linking sentences by the fatal "and."
- j. Concentrate on the anecdote, not on the self telling it.

### *Story Types*

Many stories are merely expanded anecdotes. The narrative reaches story length because obstacles intervene between story beginning and ending. Obstacles are incidents which stand in the central character's way and which must be resolved before the story can be finished.

Many stories have *complication*. Complication is a series of circumstances crossing the path of or opposing another series. For example, a young man seeks to buy a certain farm which he believes will give him greater right to ask a young lady to marry him.

But the young man's course becomes complicated when another young man wishes to buy the same farm to use its creek for irrigation. When each man discovers what the other is up to, they become embroiled. Each seeks to outwit the other. A second series of circumstances has arisen in the person of a second young man and these circumstances cross the path of the first. Complication has set in.

Stories may be imaginative, fantastic, realistic, comic, satiric, spiritual, or tragic in quality. In form they may be nursery tale, folk tale, fable, fairy tale, nature, animal, legend, myth, travel, adventure, romantic, ghost, mystery, western, epic, or historical.

### *Selecting and Adapting Material for Story Telling*

A story represents questions and answers. Usually a big question is raised in the introduction and is not answered until the end. Other questions are raised in the minds of listeners. Soon they are

answered, but the very answers provide new questions. Check this practice through familiar stories.

Stories are often selected for telling because their *backgrounds* have particular merit and interest for certain audiences. Background refers to locality. Thus, the sea is a background; a peaceful garden is another. Many sea, northwoods, and western stories are highly colored by background. Weigh this quality before selecting stories.

In adapting material one should remember that every story shows a central character—human being, animal, or animated object—in some situation or against some background. See this central character in relation to (a) theme, (b) situation, (c) other characters.

*Theme.* Every worth while story has a basic idea, topic or purpose, called its theme. Themes are particularly important to all good children's stories. In *Cinderella* the theme suggests that humility will be rewarded and pride punished. In *Goldilocks and the Three Bears* the emphasis is placed on the value of courtesy.

Never turn a theme into a moral, not even for very small children; it represents "talking down" to them. Theme should always be clear to the story teller. It should be phrased in the teller's own words as soon as practice starts.

*Situation.* Usually this is synonymous with problem. At other times situation represents little more than background, as in a story of a city boy's ramble through the woods where the most exciting moment is made up of his finding a rare flower. Situation often represents a series of obstacles. These obstacles are arranged as incidents, small scenes, which grow in importance and tension. Finally, a complication may be included. *Imprint of Immortality*, which follows, contains a series of obstacles in the form of small scenes of mounting suspense, but it has no complication. Complication, as explained, is one full set of values which crosses the path of a second full set.

*Other Characters.* A story adapted for telling should have few characters. Introducing too many characters confuses the audience. Rarely are more than two characters important. Usually there is one central character; all others are foils which give him chances to say or do revealing things, or they fill some practical purpose such as providing complication or obstructions which increase suspense. Always be sure of the purpose served by each character in a given story.

The story parts—*introduction, development, climax and close*—are developed as described in Chapter Fourteen.

### *Technique of Story Telling*

Actual conditions which will face the story teller and should be known in advance are the place and probable audience size, the sex and type of audience and, finally, the occasion, such as an outdoor campfire, Flag Day, banquet, et cetera.

There is a difference of approach demanded, depending upon whether one is to use a platform, stage, drawing room, microphone, televisior, or if one is to speak at a campfire or at a long table. In each case visualize the precise starting conditions and plan accordingly. Under all conditions keep the story flexible and informal.

After selecting or adapting a story and knowing the conditions, the procedure is basically the same as the approach to any presentation. A first aim is to absorb it as a live experience. Shun line by line memorization; it creates stilted delivery. Read and reread the story several times; then tell it aloud. Naturally, this improvised telling will be rough at first. Reread the story to test accuracy of memory. Soon incidents will begin to group themselves properly; the story will begin to "come alive."

Next, one must consider (a) mood, (b) characterization, (c) incidents, (d) vocal flexibility, (e) tempo.

*Mood.* The tone in which a story is told may regale an audience with laughter, tempt them into feeling serious, or leave them unmoved. The mood in which the author has written his story should determine the key, or tone, in which it is told. Decide upon the story's mood before telling it.

It is desirable to retain the author's style and, to this end, one should retain his best words and phrases, which also helps to set the key in which the story is delivered.

*Characterization.* Every author provides at least broad character traits which the story teller can project in suggestive impersonation. *In practicing a story it is necessary to decide upon some manner and voice tone suggestive of each character.* At times the principal character may be impersonated quite vividly—depending upon how dramatic the story is, the teller's preferences, and the audience age.

Impersonation of characters increases in complexity as audience age mounts. Very young audiences need simple discourse and little

characterization. Older groups permit more and more realistic use of impersonation.

In impersonating a character it is important to remember that story telling is a narrative medium. Character movements should never be more than suggestive. One should not carry characterization any farther than is required to heighten meaning.

*Incidents.* The story teller proceeds from incident to incident. The pause between one incident and the pick-up of the next should be unmistakable. Such pauses provide audiences with moments for digesting what was said; they increase suspense; they provide the teller with a breathing space; they accentuate the rhythm of unfoldment.

*Vocal flexibility* is essential to suggestive word imagery. The rise and fall of voice emphasizes characterization, intensifies development, creates suspense. Deliver minor points of the story without any particular intonation, and thus save vocal emphasis for whatever is important. Names must be introduced clearly; remember to accent the important vowels; be sure, also, to let accented vowels give action and life to action words. Note the following illustrative opening. The italicized words require creative treatment and visualization.

*"Benvenuto Cellini stood in the audience chamber of the Duke of Florence. He stood proudly, as befitted the greatest goldsmith of 16th Century Italy. The Duke waved aside his courtiers and motioned Benvenuto forward."*

The more inflection one uses, generally speaking, the less its value. Inflection, as a means of showing meaning, is so effective that it should be used carefully. In the above selection, words and phrases not italicized should be taken in stride.

*Tempo.* The speed of story telling depends upon the particular story and the audience. Some stories are slow in pace because they are filled with explanatory details so delightful and important that they represent half the story's value. Other tales must be told with crackling zest and fairly quick tempo. Again, the pace of a story must be varied to suit audiences. One must slow down when it is clear that points are not registering well.

### *Considerations for Audience Presentation*

*Platform presentations.* Walk forward with poise. Let audience conversation simmer down before speaking. The first word either

gives the audience a sense of comfort and enjoyment which relaxes them or brings them to the edge of their seats to listen strainedly. The ideal standing position is the chest leading and weight on the forward foot to allow for easy shift of position. The voice should reach beyond the last row without suggestion of loudness.

*Audience relationship* is established with the opening. Use the above suggestions to induce listeners to feel that they are about to share an interesting experience. All thoughts of self—such as worry about one's voice, about the story's dramatic value, about one's entrance—should be banished. Audience relationship is established best when one is sure that practice has brought mastery, that the audience really has a delightful treat in store, that the teller is going to enjoy sharing that treat.

*Character Placement.* It is a simple matter, during the unfolding of incidents, to be sure that character positions are clear to the audience. Use a slight diagonal turn when addressing the imaginary figure. If the imaginary figure is strongly visualized this simple device is entirely effective.

### *Example of Story Telling*

The following historical story has been specially adapted from Benvenuto Cellini's Autobiography. After familiarizing himself with it, the reader will better appreciate points of story telling which it illustrates.

## IMPRINT OF IMMORTALITY

### INTRODUCTION

(*Lift names and key words into prominence. Create atmosphere. Give ictus to key words. Use voice and mannerism for Duke. Establish placements.*) Benvenuto Cellini stood in the audience chamber of the Duke of Florence. He stood proudly, as befitted the greatest goldsmith of 16th Century Italy. The Duke waved aside his courtiers and motioned Benvenuto forward. "I am impressed, Benvenuto, with the tale of your success in France."

(*Bow. Use narrative tone.*) Benvenuto bowed. His agile mind told him this was but a preamble, that silence was the best means of learning the Duke's thoughts.

"Friend Benvenuto, if you feel inclined to execute something for me, I can make it worth your while." Benvenuto bowed assent. The Duke, pleased, continued. (*Regal, enthusiastic.*) "As a display of skill, I should like you to produce a Perseus. I have long set my heart upon such a monument."

(*Project contrasts of "murmur," "astonishment"; "never attempted," "eyes sparkle."*) A murmur of astonishment arose among the courtiers. They knew the goldsmith had never attempted so ambitious a work. Benvenuto's eyes sparkled. Had this Duke divined that he, Italy's greatest goldsmith, was anxious to prove his artistry with works rivaling Michelangelo and Donatello? (*Smile before speaking Cellini's reply.*) He smiled. "Illustrious, I shall give my whole heart to it!"

A little more conversation ensued. (*Suggest the bow.*) Then Cellini bowed out from the illustrious presence.

#### DEVELOPMENT

(*Indicate Cellini's vitality; the admirable quality of model.*) He went at once to his shop. His mind was aflame. In one of his furious bursts of energy he set himself to the task of producing a model. He worked incessantly, giving to it all his skill and knowledge of art. Finally it was finished—of wax and of a cubit's height.

#### FIRST OBSTRUCTION

(*Imply mystery and frustration.*) But, then, although the Duke was in Florence, Benvenuto found it impossible to see him. Some influence seemed to frustrate his most determined efforts.

(*Suggest tenacity through sustained pitch, pace, and timbre.*) Benvenuto, however, was not easily foiled. He lay in wait near the private chambers. When the Duke appeared the artist silently held up his wax model.

(*Use restrained smile before speech.*) The Duke smiled a greeting. "Ah! Benvenuto. The Perseus?"

(*Cellini must react before speaking.*) "If it please you, illustrious."

(*Use suggestive impersonation in this section.*) The Duke examined the model with care. At length he motioned the artist to enter the private chambers. There he said: "If you could only execute this model with the same perfection upon a larger scale, Benvenuto, it would be the finest piece in the piazza."

This was uttered with a blend of admiration and skepticism. (*Cellini is bold and prophetic.*) Benvenuto drew himself up. "Upon the piazza are now standing works by the great Donatello and the incomparable Michelangelo, the two greatest men who ever lived since the days of the ancients. But, since your Excellence encourages my model with such praise, I feel the heart to execute it at least thrice as well in bronze."

(*Here the voice creates all effects; chief tone being innuendo.*) It was a retort of skillful audacity and challenge, this linking himself with the great masters, and one of the courtiers said as much—

sneeringly adding that since the goldsmith had never yet turned out a large piece he should be permitted to try one statute. His sneer further conveyed his belief that once the Perseus was cast, the last laugh would be on Benvenuto.

(*Sustain level intonation and pause values.*) Benvenuto replied stoutly. The upshot was that he was provided with a house, a shop, workmen and materials.

#### SECOND OBSTRUCTION

(*Build to emphatic statement.*) No sooner was he installed than the Duke came. He came repeatedly—always a little guarded. He came again on the day the full-sized models were finished. This time his doubts were not left unvoiced. “Benvenuto, this model cannot be cast in bronze; the laws of art do not permit it.”

(*Start slowly, letting enthusiasm mount; end on manly note.*) The goldsmith was taken aback, but his reply was made in manly dignity. “My lord, I know how little confidence you have in me. I have seen it petering out and I believe your most illustrious excellency lends too ready an ear to my calumniators. I have, moreover, constructed my furnace design as to add many technical improvements—including two issues for the metal—because this difficult and twisted figure could not otherwise come out perfectly. Put trust in me; supply me with the aid I need and I shall complete a work to delight your soul. But, if your excellency goes on disheartening me, neither I nor any man alive can hope to achieve the slightest thing of value.”

(*Contrast Duke's conflicting viewpoint.*) “But, Benvenuto, how is it possible that yonder splendid head of the Medusa, so high up there in the grasp of Perseus, should ever come out perfect?”

(*Sustain level intonation.*) By illustrations, Benvenuto attempted to explain. The Duke listened critically. At the end he looked queerly at the artist. He shook his head and left without further ceremony.

(*Hint despair.*) Benvenuto bit his lip, watched his patron depart. He felt clearly that someone worked against him. “Was ever there an Italian without his enemies?”

#### CLIMAX STARTS

(*Take fresh hold of story. Shift position and change the voice key. Increase pace. Explain details in enthusiastic and rhythmical pulsations of the voice.*) In a new burst of vigor he provided loads of pinewood. He proceeded to cloth the Perseus wax model with a coating of clay and then he wound metal bands about the whole. This was to hold the clay together after it hardened. The building of a huge furnace was his next step—a furnace, funnel-shaped,

built with bricks so arranged that a plentiful supply of draft holes would bring air to the fire. Finally he dug a deep pit below.

He returned to the model and lit a slow fire which burned for two days and which drew off all the wax and baked the clay mold. This clay would now provide an imprint for the hot metal. Now, by windlasses, he raised the model high above the ground and swung it over the furnace. Using great care he lowered it into the pit and proceeded to bank it with earth. Ever, as the earth grew higher, he inserted earthenware tubes to serve as air-vents which should help temper the cooling metal.

(*Pick up "At last"; suggest his joy and fear.*) At last he felt that all was admirably fixed. His work-people seemed to understand his unusual method of statue casting. Now that the climax of his operations had arrived, he felt a strange joy and fear.

(*Visualize this action in detail. Paint a picture.*) "Come," he commanded an apprentice. "Set the furnace going." Other assistants heaped on the logs of pine. At once the fire roared. Indeed, such good draft had been provided that Benvenuto was forced to rush from side to side feeding it evenly. It was hot, exacting work. Flesh rebelled; but the goldsmith forced every muscle and fibre to respond.

### THIRD OBSTRUCTION

(*Catastrophe! Continue to visualize mounting perplexities.*) Catastrophe! The workshop took fire from the shower of sparks and terrific heat. It was the first of heart-rending perplexities. Some of the men must be spared to fight the flames. Next a storm arose. It rapidly grew in fury, loosing great torrents until it threatened to cool the blazing fire and spoil the liquefying metal. "Courage!" Benvenuto roared. "Fight on!"

(*Continue sense of suspense.*) For hours he was the center of fierce activity, now here, now there—attending to this detail and to that. But flesh could not stand such a pace. A fever laid hold of him. The furnace heat, the rain, his super-human exertions took their toll of the goldsmith. Suddenly he felt as if he were soon to die.

(*Hint Cellini's possible death.*) "Bernardino," he said heavily to a trusted assistant. "Observe the rules which I have taught you; do your best with all despatch, for soon the metal will be fused. You cannot go wrong; these honest men will get the channels ready. As for me, I feel more ill than ever before in my life, and verily I believe I shall die!"

(*Intensify dragging defeat.*) He dragged himself, thus despairing, into the house. He dropped onto his bed and soon crept in. All at once he was assailed by every manner of ache. "Oh! Oh! I shall not live till tomorrow."

## FOURTH OBSTRUCTION

(*Sustain the intensity of drama.*) In the midst of his groans a man entered the chamber—a figure with a body like a twisted S who at once raised a lamentable cry. “O Benvenuto! Your statue is spoiled, and there is no hope whatever of saving it.”

Benvenuto howled in anguish. (*Cellini's lightning response. Contrast flashing verbal retort with physical weakness.*) “Traitors! Envious!” Jumping up, he began to dress. “An act of treason!” Somehow his shaking fingers managed the buttons and clasps.

Down at the workshop the men stood stupefied and downcast. The desperate artist shouted at them. (*Here is spirit battling flesh.*) “Up with you! Since you have not been able or willing to obey the directions I gave you, obey me now that I am with you.”

(*Here starts the great climb toward climax.*) A smirking assistant spoke up from the rear. “But, look you, Benvenuto, you are attempting an enterprise which the laws of art do not sanction and which cannot succeed.”

(*Visualize*) “What?” Benvenuto’s suspicions blazed. He turned to the man with such fury and obvious intent that all the workmen shouted as one:

“On then! Give orders! We will obey your least commands so long as strength is left in us.” They feared that the artist, if contradicted, would fall dead at once.

(*Visualize.*) Benvenuto whirled to the furnace. A glance showed the metal had caked. “Oak-wood! Get some young oak-wood!”

(*Visualize.*) As soon as the first armfuls arrived he tossed them on the grate. They caught; the intensity of the fire mounted once more. And once more the rooftop caught fire, in spite of the violent storm still raging. Next, Benvenuto ordered carpets, boards and hangings to be brought up. These he had set up as protection against the falling torrents. His anxious eyes could not stay away from the furnace.

(*Contrast catastrophe with final note of victory.*) The curdled metal seemed on the point of melting. “Pewter!” the artist cried. Into the middle of the molten mass he tossed his last half pig of pewter. Rapidly the caked bronze began to liquefy. The men set up a cheer. Benvenuto forgot his fever.

## FURTHER OBSTRUCTION

(*Contrast fresh catastrophes with implication of victory.*) Without warning there was a tremendous flash, on its heels a blast like a thunderbolt from the furnace. Terror seized the men. Benvenuto looked about. He pointed upward. “The cap! It has blown off the furnace top!” It had, indeed, and now the

bronze was bubbling up from the lower furnace depths. Again Benvenuto pointed. "Open the channel of the mold and let the metal pour in!" It was done.

(*Disaster again. Sustain the vowels.*) But fresh disaster loomed. The molten liquid did not pour as fast as it should.

(*Cellini's flash!*) "Pewter!"

(*Despairing counterflash!*) "Good Benvenuto, we used it all!"

(*Cellini's final inspiration.*) "Pewter—get the cooking dishes, all!" Almost beside himself, the artist sent the workmen flying.

(*Build pace toward final climax.*) One by one he added platters, porringers and dishes—to the number of two hundred—into the mass. His quick wit had told him that the furious heat of the oak-wood had caused the alloy to be consumed too fast.

(*Success!*) The expedient succeeded. Soon everyone could see that the bronze was in perfect liquefaction and that the mold was filling. A great cheer went up.

#### ENDING

In thanksgiving Benvenuto dropped to his knees. No doubts assailed him. He had the artist's perfect faith. His voice was low, husky. (*Cellini speaks in low, satisfying, controlled tones.*) "Donatello, Michelangelo—greetings, brothers. Benvenuto Cellini joins your company. My Perseus will please the Duke."

#### *Seeing the Story Whole*

As Cellini tells this experience in his autobiography it does not make a rounded story. There is too much technical description; too many details intervene which have no place in compact story form. The student should secure the autobiography and compare it with this adaptation. The narrative here has been pruned and in places changed to direct discourse to provide more opportunities for impersonation. Also, where Cellini makes but casual reference to a secret enemy, the point has been built up to provide more suspense. This arouses a question: Who is the enemy? More questions are stimulated by emphasizing that Cellini has never before turned out a large statue. Can he hope to rival the masters Donatello and Michelangelo? As previously described, a story represents a series of questions and answers.

The elements of story structure are best understood when grasped in the light of the whole story, for their values saturate every line. Of course every story does not require that equal attention be paid to such elements. The Cellini story, for example, is not greatly

concerned with background—suggesting only that which accompanies the thought of an experience in Italy during the 16th Century.

Mood in this instance is rather serious and also exciting.

Situation is emphasized definitely. Here is a goldsmith with a glorious opportunity to place himself among the masters.

Characterization mainly is implied through voice. The story teller should create an impression that Cellini is alert, resourceful and not easily beaten.

### *Recognizing Story Parts*

Audience interest is the first objective of the story teller. No time is lost in revealing enough of the story to arouse interest. The central character is introduced quickly, together with details of time, place, situation and story trend—quite as in the anecdote. Note how quickly all this is developed in *Imprint of Immortality*. Four short paragraphs form the *introduction*.

After disclosing the initial facts, the objective is to tell how the experience ended. However, between the opening of a story and its resolution lie a number of incidents which give fuller understanding of the entire situation. And because a story is an artistic product, these incidents are not grouped aimlessly; they are organized into a pattern of mounting dramatic episodes, called the story *development*.

Cellini's attempt to show his model is one incident. Another is the Duke's last visit. In the casting of the Perseus several others develop: the fire on the roof, the storm, his fever, his visitor, his discovery of the caked metal, the explosion, his hurling of the household pewter into the fire—all these form connecting links which knit introduction and ending.

The development of *Imprint of Immortality* runs from the moment that Cellini bows out of the Duke's audience chamber to the point when the Duke walks out on the goldsmith, leaving him biting his lip.

*Climax* begins immediately. The die is cast. There can be no turning back. Victory or defeat are the only alternatives. Cellini orders the pine wood, indicating he is going ahead. "Will he or will he not succeed" becomes the prime question from this point on.

Note that climax is not merely the tensest moment. Climax begins upon a relatively low note and, as incident follows incident, it works up to a pitch.

In story *ending*, it is most important to close quickly. The next most important consideration is to tie up loose ends. If a fact is not stated it should be implied. Thus, although the Duke has not accepted the Perseus as yet, Cellini's falling to his knees implies that all will be well and that he has joined the ranks of the immortals. Thus is interest satisfied.

## CHAPTER SIXTEEN

### PROFESSIONAL IMITATION AND IMPERSONATION

"The greatest point is to choose good models." LORD CHESTERTON

PROFESSIONAL IMITATION and impersonation are intimate arts. The imitation or impersonation of a celebrity means little to an audience unless it shares a knowledge of the character portrayed and can thus appreciate the art involved in the "take off." However, radio and television are steadily acquainting everyone with the leaders in all walks of life. Naturally, as the public learns more about these leading men and women, it can better enjoy the intimacies of imitation and impersonation.

#### IMITATORS

One can be an imitator without being an impersonator but, as the gifted Cecilia Loftus has said, "The impersonator first must be an imitator." Imitate voices, gestures, walks, mannerisms, facial expressions. Above all, practice, practice, practice. Observation must be applied constantly.

Some students have a special talent for imitation, but it is surprising to discover how many have real ability when encouraged. The usual retarding fear is the idea that physical limitations of height, girth, voice or personality represent handicaps. This fear is groundless. It is stimulating to see, for example, how easily a short, thin person can suggest jovial roundness; how a heavy-set student can imitate wisplike characteristics; how a young imitator can create the illusion of age. How? *The successful imitator persuades audiences to ignore the actual and see only what he wants them to see.*

The imitator should use actual models, and make notes of interesting details observed in people. The ear should be trained so that he may differentiate elements of voice used by his subject; he must also train his eye so that his reproduction of line of movement, facial play and gesture will be authentic.

Three precepts, when practiced, lead to effective imitation. Intelligence, eye and ear must be *trained* to observe behavior in others. Second, the imitator must concentrate so strongly on expressing what he wants others to see that they will ignore his personality and see only what he wants them to visualize. Finally, one must not undertake too much at once; no one can organize a complete imitation at a swoop; it is necessary to work with one element at a time. Many imitators prefer to master the recreating of the subject's voice as the first step. Next, one might undertake imitation of line of movement. Third and fourth would be facial expression and gestures, mannerisms or idiosyncrasies. This is the procedure of professional imitators.

#### IMPERSONATORS

Impersonation, as used here, refers to the recognized special art of that name. Thus there is special significance involved in saying: Cecilia Loftus, Elsie Janis and Dorothy Sands have succeeded brilliantly in the art of impersonation. Of course all acting is impersonating, but it is desirable to keep emphasis on acting when speaking of group actors. One would not say Spencer Tracy is an adornment to the art of impersonation; rather one would say Spencer Tracy is an adornment to the art of acting.

"Impersonation," says the noted mimic, Dorothy Sands, "differs from imitation in the added *comment* on the personality supplied by the impersonator." The dictionary defines comment as "a remark or criticism." The impersonator, then, adds a revealing remark or criticisms to the characterization he portrays. To illustrate, an earlier chapter discussed the portrayal of a pompous character and observed that some actors might feel they had done enough when their characterization brought out this element of pomposity. But to the true actor this would not be enough; he would say that it is all very well to characterize a type but that he wishes to portray the *individuality* of this person. He would therefore add a "comment" to the role. He would introduce suggestions that this pompous man was really, underneath, a nervous and frightened person who covered his fears with bombast. This would be throwing real insight into character; and the audience, observing this, would go away from the performance feeling wiser toward the type of character in question; enjoyment would be enriched by knowledge.

A brilliant description of the function of impersonation is sup-

plied by the late Max Beerbohm.\* When this essay was written it was customary to speak of "mimicry." For this word substitute impersonation.

"As is parody to literature, so is mimicry to acting. Mimicry is a form of criticism; and a distinct individuality—a point of view—is as needful in the mimic as in the critic . . . The proper function of the mimic is like that of the parodist in words or of the caricaturist



Dorothy Sands as *Lillian Russell*. Costume, hand pose, facial expression combine to caricature "sweetness and light."

in line drawing—so to exaggerate the salient points of his subject that we can, whilst we laugh at a grotesque superficial effect, find sharper insight into the subject's soul, or behold that soul as it appears to the performer himself."

### *The Importance of Stage Presence*

When imitation or impersonation is presented on the stage as a complete art form, the entertainer may present his sketches as representations or presentations.† In either style there is a need for keep-

\* *Saturday Review of Literature*, July, 1905.

† These acting styles are defined on page 114.

ing aware of psychic distance. To begin with, the mono-actor's stage presence should reveal assurance, presence of mind and good-humored dignity.

A sensitive feel for audience relationship is a second essential to stage presence. The interpreter must keep directly aware of audience response and if he senses that the spectators are slow to grasp what he is doing, he should emphasize and broaden his interpretation until the right depth and rhythm are established. At all times it is vital to seem relaxed. The mono-actor may be so organized that acting tenses him to a high pitch; if so, this must remain his affair and must not be visible to the audience. When the interpreter appears relaxed, the audience follows suit. And only when an audience is fully at ease can it enjoy itself and allow the mono-actor full scope to create satisfying, impersonative illusion.

### *Adding "Comment" to Impersonation*

"Impersonation," says Miss Sands, "requires a study of the individual selected. First, I listen to the voice, in order to acquire a mastery of rhythm and tone. Afterwards, when I feel *saturated* with this knowledge, I use it in the lines which have been prepared for the subject. The next step is to study movement and gesture and facial expression. One is pretty apt to get the key to a personality by concentrating upon the expression in the eyes.

"Finally, when I feel I have *digested* all these externals of personality, I try to get inside the creation—which has been thus taken apart and reassembled. I keep at this until I can feel that I look out through that subject's eyes."

This is a valuable revelation of the procedure employed by one of the world's able, professional mimics. The student need not follow the precise order of steps described here, but certainly needs to use them all. More important still, *the impersonation of a specific personality requires first analysis and then actual imitation of that personality's external mannerisms and behavior.*

"Afterwards, when I feel saturated with this knowledge I use it in *lines already prepared* for the subject." The artist's "comment" is contained in her sketch "already prepared." But how did she find this comment and how may others apply it to impersonations?

Remember that comment on character is the impersonator's way of giving an audience "insight into the subject's soul." Comment re-

veals more to an audience than can be shown through faithful imitation.

Some impersonators illuminate their sketches by caricaturing the subject's personal mannerisms. Some unique aspect of character or personality is seized upon and sharpened. By exploiting the mannerism out of proportion, audience attention is directed to it. The peculiarity, isolated, becomes enlightening; it seems to provide a key to understanding of the subject's personality.

Comment is supplied through situation also. A hilarious contrast can be provided, for example, in a sketch wherein a serious, dignified person encounters an embarrassing predicament, thus revealing an unsuspected trait in that person's character. In such instances, the impersonator gives a faithful imitation of the character and lets the comment be supplied by the situation. For instance, a life-long foe of intoxicants helps the "sick" husband of a friend into a hotel lobby. Just as a group of her temperance associates bear down upon her she discovers that the man is intoxicated. Her embarrassment supplies material for comment.

Impersonators also invade the mental processes of subjects in their search for comment. Every community contains the type who prides himself on his alert mind and broad interests. An amusing and penetrating impersonation can be prepared around such a character. The impersonator might show the subject dealing simultaneously with half a dozen problems—and scrambling them all.

### *Caricature in Impersonation*

The *imitator's* results depend upon skill in noting and reproducing details of character possessed by a given subject. The *impersonator* goes beyond this; to observation he must add imagination. He must catch human implications in things and in fields removed from direct human activity. For example, an impersonator may plan to recreate the "portrait" of a subject who is given to noisy vulgarity. Suddenly he realizes that the subject, when annoyed, gives vent to an impatient noise that sounds like a snorting bull. His imagination will then suggest that a bull-snort makes an illuminating contribution to the caricature he is preparing.

A train whistle, wailing through country moors, has a tone suggestive of human melancholy. Other sounds of natural or mechanical origin can be adapted to impersonation. A visit to the zoo will reveal animal sounds that contain a world of ready-made impersonative

values. The chatter of monkeys, the screech of birds, the grunts of seals, the yawns of lions—all these have suggestibility. One subject's sigh may have much in common with the neigh of a horse, another's laugh may sound like a parrot's chattering scream, a voice rhythm may have much in common with the "choo choo" sound and pace of a starting locomotive. An alert ear and active imagination will capture these significant. When captured and used, they are of priceless aid in "taking off" a subject's mannerisms.

### *A Theory on Laughter Applied to Movement*

The impersonator's pantomime is often unique. He often uses the pantomime of, say, a Charles Chaplin. For, while the impersonator uses natural, conventional movement, he also goes beyond this to employ what might be called "unhuman" movement. Such pantomime has been discussed by Henri Bergson, celebrated French philosopher and psychologist.\*

H. Bergson calls attention to the laughter excited by the unexpected appearance of old, out-of-date hats. He says laughter is stimulated because, to modern eyes, these hats have become unhuman, they have lost the popular acceptance which once made them proper headgear for human beings. Baggy trousers and huge, loose coats, says H. Bergson, create the same impression; they no longer seem right apparel.

H. Bergson develops his theory of laughter "in response to the mechanical, the automata." In brief, he says that when people's actions are very stiff and are removed from the normal they remind us of robots, of automatons. This is readily proved by people who have a stiffness of carriage and walk that is so pronounced as to seem unnatural and abnormal; such a walk is often so stiff as to suggest the unhuman, the robot. The walk of Charles Chaplin's vagabond character illustrates this. It is human enough to have a touch of pathos, but it is far enough out of the category of natural walks to be described as unhuman. It is this unhuman element that makes it so laughter-provoking.

The impersonator must be ever ready to identify the unhuman in movement and to use it as a means of supplying comment on his impersonations.

\* *Laughter*, Henri L. Bergson (Trans. by C. Brereton, F. Rothwell; Macmillan Co., New York, 1935).

*Material for Imitation and Impersonation*

It is easy to write material for imitation or impersonation, though it is best to start with sketches that require only imitation. Anything in the way of a situation will serve, provided that the sketch pictures the subject at those moments that he reveals the idiosyncrasies and peculiarities that make him worth imitating in the first place.

With respect to preparing material for impersonation there is one important matter to be kept in mind: "comment" requires contrast. If a character in public life, for example, has an unusually retiring nature, he must be pictured in a scene wherein this quietness is inadequate to the situation. If a public character is excessively well-bred (remember, one must always seize upon *any* extreme of behavior) he might be pictured as happening in at a noisy picnic or party.

Sometimes an imitation or impersonation is built up from lines of a play in which the subject has acted. Again, a news story often provides the basis for a sketch; one can give an imaginary account of what transpired. Insofar as principles of writing such sketches are concerned, little technical knowledge or ability is needed. The student is referred to Chapter Fourteen.

## CHAPTER SEVENTEEN

### MONODRAMA, LITERARY MONOLOGUE, SOLILOQUY

"Some day there will appear alone upon the stage a man or woman with the blaze of the prophets, and two continents will soon be talking of little else" CHARLES MORGAN

A MONODRAMA is a dramatic sketch presented by one person, who may impersonate one or more characters in one or more scenes. Monodramas never involve actual dialogue exchange; replies are always inferred. When there is more than one character in a scene, the first character speaks as long as it takes to develop his point of view. At that point the conversation is taken up by the next character, who proceeds in the same manner.

#### *Types of Presentation*

Monodramas may be stylized and distinctly literary, as in the dramatic monologues of Robert Browning, the characterizations of Henry Austin Dobson and the soliloquies of Shakespeare and Moliere.

At other times they are realistic with the stress placed on characterization, as in the writing of Cornelia Otis Skinner, Ruth Draper, Helen Howe, Clay Franklin, Eugene O'Neill, and Leland Powers, or the caricatures of John Hoysradt.

#### *Differences of Terminology*

Some people refer to monodrama by the following terms: solo sketch, solo drama, one character drama, monologue, dramologue, one-woman show, one-man show, literary monologue, dramatic sequence, vignette, saynette, sketch, soliloquy, character sketch, one-character sketch, one-character play, characterization, caricature. Each type, regardless of its implication, is a monodrama.

Cornelia Otis Skinner and Helen Howe have developed unique vehicles which are based on the single scene, one-character type of monodrama, but so transcend the medium that these artists avoid that term when describing their vehicles. Miss Skinner speaks of her

art as a "One Woman Show." This is a professional designation which no one else uses. Miss Howe has developed the term "dramatic sequence," a phrase which is gaining public acceptance.

Miss Skinner's most ambitious undertaking to date has been a dramatization of the Margaret Ayer Barnes' novel, *Edna His Wife*.<sup>\*</sup> Eight characters are impersonated in eleven scenes, but in no scene is more than one character impersonated. Miss Howe's *Manana* is a unique development which embraces poetry and prose and is thoroughly distinctive. It is produced in several scenes and calls for impersonation of several characters.

### *The Aims of Monodrama*

The aims of this art are two-fold: to secure the imaginative co-operation of the audience, and to create an experience of esthetic pleasure for them.

It is essential to secure audience cooperation, as an anecdote told by Ruth Draper illustrates. "Let's get outa here," a tradesman growled to his wife. They kept a grocery store near the Riviera Theatre and she finally had persuaded him to attend a performance of Ruth Draper's character sketches. But, at intermission he was on his feet urging her to the exit. To her expostulations he was deaf. "What do you wanta stay for—seen her, haven't you? *Talkin' to nothin' but an empty chair!*"

Only when an audience listens creatively is complete illusion possible. The interpreter must strive to win audience cooperation and must be alert to keep it.

It is worth repeating that the aim of the interpreter is to provide his audience with experiences that give esthetic pleasure, the aim of all art. In providing such experiences and pleasure the mono-actor may deal with deep, probing values that stir an audience so deeply as to send them away feeling that they have had a truly creative experience. Again, the performer may be content to portray lighter experiences that do not touch the emotions deeply but do provide keen entertainment.

### *Mastering the Monodrama*

The types of acting approach to monodrama are: the *realistic* which is explained in Chapter Ten, the *stylistic* which is described later in this chapter.

<sup>\*</sup> Dealt with further under *Play Reading* (page 156).

The introduction in monodrama occurs as close to the point of climax as possible. This helps make every moment interesting, assuming that the sketch has good values. Introduction should set the stage for the climax. It outlines those essentials which enable an audience to understand the direction in which the situation is moving. It provides necessary information on time, place, plot and character. Development expands these details; for, up to a certain point, the more an audience learns of character and situation, the more interested it becomes. The climax follows with dramatic impact. Climax resolves the experience which has been built to a focal point by the introduction and development. The ending follows quickly.

In mastering the sketch note where one element stops and another begins. This knowledge of structure aids one in grasping the dramatic pattern; it also helps to develop proper rhythm of interpretation.

### *Taking the Stage*

Every sketch is preceded by a brief introductory description such as "I should like to offer a sketch, *Honky-Tonk Parade*, by Clay Franklin, which throws an interesting light on that somewhat romantic, swaggering, leather-lunged character of the circus sideshow, The Barker. As you meet him he is just starting the day." In presenting a scene from *Macbeth* one might say, "I should like to present one of the greatest conceptions of the force of morbid conscience which exists in dramatic literature: the sleep-walking scene from William Shakespeare's *Macbeth*."

Introductions always (a) give the name of the selection, (b) the author's name, (c) characters' names, time, place and (if it adds interest) a brief description of the situation. Keep the introduction short, then retire and let the curtain open, or turn aside and suggest entrance in character.

As soon as a mono-actor such as Miss Helen Howe begins her sketch she reveals important details. Her walk suggests the character, or the way she sits or begins an imaginary action. She lets the audience discover (through her characterization) the character's age, temperament, mood and social status. Well aware is she that these are important matters; that if she gives the audience an easily understandable character picture at the beginning her performance has a "flying start."

*Character Placement.* Upon "stepping into character" Miss Howe

focuses her eyes upon the imaginary character with whom she is speaking. This means that she has previously decided upon *character placement*. Such placement is always arranged in terms of audience visibility—for the audience must always see the mono-actor from the most revealing angles of the stage.



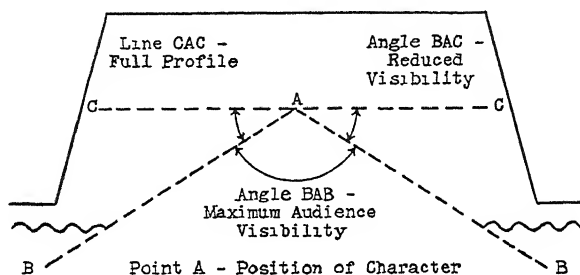
Helen Howe in a scene from her sketch, *Manana*. Observe her glance focused toward the imaginary character.

The interpreter's own position is the *primary position*; it represents the apex of a triangle. The lines of this triangle converge, from the two far corners of the auditorium, upon the interpreter. At this apex the mono-actor can feel sure that all movement and facial expression are clear to the whole audience.

*Getting a "Feel" for the Diagonal.* The "feel" for the diagonal is something which every actor must develop; play characters constantly make use of a diagonal relationship. In mono-acting the interpreter is always at the apex (A) implied in the triangle (B A B) of the accompanying diagram.

Effective stage movement rarely places the mono-actor's profile

to the audience. The best view is similar to the "three-quarter" view shown in most photographs.



In planning the placement of characters, Miss Howe keeps imaginary characters with their backs to the audience so far as this is consistent with the action. Finally, in speaking to characters, she "looks them in the eye." Many times an apprentice irritates audiences and bewilders them by focusing the eye too low, as though the imaginary characters were dwarfs. Unless the imaginary character is a small child the best procedure is to treat the subject as being of one's own height.

### *Should One Use Scenery?*

Suggestive sets are usually favored. Ruth Draper has created two hundred characterizations with the aid of a few chairs, benches, a stool, and a table. Blanche Yurka prefers simplicity for her play excerpts. "The stage set," says Cornelia Otis Skinner, "should only point the character and action and should not in any sense be full, for if one has full sets one might as well have a full cast." \*

Concerning stage properties, no hard and fast rule can be made. What is appropriate for one sketch may be wrong for another; what one interpreter uses skillfully, another cannot use. Some mono-actors like to set a chair for imaginary characters when they themselves are sitting, especially when the imaginary character is old or crippled. And where a sketch calls for a parent to put her "child" down beside her, illusion is helped if there is actual room for the child to sit. Also, when the central character and the imagined character are seated in a tête-à-tête, it is desirable to use a bench or divan.

\* Like every good artist, Miss Skinner has not hesitated to break her own rule; in *Edna His Wife* quite elaborate sets were used. Yet, in the main Miss Skinner's recommendation is sound.



Clay Franklin in *Boy Meets Girl*—1910. Entire line of movement projects  
“bashfulness.”

### *Hand Properties*

Some monologists limit their use of properties to hand “props.” They use such articles as purse, compact, pipe, powder puff, cigarette, jewelry, and other items, mainly for the purpose of showing characteristic action through the handling of them.

But care must be taken to avoid situations where real properties might need to be passed to, or taken from, imaginary people. Illusion cannot support this. Thus, in a sketch showing a woman at her paper stall, it is desirable to spread out newspapers for atmosphere, but when imaginary customers appear a problem arises. The solution is for the main character to gesture to the imaginary characters to take their papers. She can, however, pretend to take money and

hand them change. In a smoking scene a real match should not be struck in order to light the cigarette of an imaginary character.

### *Costuming the Sketch*

Does the sketch demand costume? If costume creates a needed effect it is not only allowable but necessary. Costume, as a rule, is suggestive. Where nothing more is gained, keep it suggestive. In a several-character monodrama, however, all characters impersonated should differ in costume whenever it is practical to arrange it. Of course, if two or more characters are impersonated in the same scene, nothing can be done. If the monodrama is in two or more scenes, a change of entire costume is often helpful. In any case, be sure to use at least a hat, coat, scarf, or bag, to suggest change.

To all that has been said in this chapter in connection with "do's and don'ts," one more word may be added. Brooks Atkinson, dramatic critic, has wisely observed that "No convention is bad in the theatre which an audience will accept; no convention is good which breaks illusion." Every present-day dramatic and theatrical principle once was a precedent. New precedents may at any time upset old ones. For example, Helen Howe, in her sketch, *Manana*, has mingled poetry with prose and the total effect is most praiseworthy. Yet this is a precedent; no one before her, apparently, has ever combined prose and poetic forms. Innovations such as these and Miss Skinner's presentation of her dramatization of *Edna His Wife* lift the solo sketch to an established artistic position.

## LITERARY MONOLOGUE

### *Values of Literary Monologue*

When an audience cooperates imaginatively with a performance of monodrama it imagines the presence of characters actually absent, imagines the use of non-existent properties, imagines a scene not really shown, imagines details of costume, appearance, age and nationality that are not present. Of course the mono-actor may introduce real properties, costume, make-up and may actually stage the scene. But, in what is called the "literary monologue," he does few of these things.

The literary monologue is a stylized monodrama. This dramatic vehicle rarely uses "realistic" lines, literal transcripts of speech. It moves even farther from reality by employing a metrical line, often

called blank verse. Yet the writer of the literary monologue knows that his product does not become "artificial" simply because he thus turns his back on realism. Realism is only one way by which the theatre tries to create empathy in its audiences.

The literary monologue, because it turns its back on realism and makes its appeal imaginatively, invites retelling: the experience involved does not so much seem the particular experience of the characters as it seems the property of the spectator. Such stage literature has as its greatest asset a freedom from confining reality. The apprentice, however, may find difficulty in infusing true life and pulsation into a medium so stylistic as the literary monologue.

In the following excerpt from Robert Browning's *My Last Duchess*, a literary monologue, cues have been supplied to suggest possible interpretative coloring and action. Once the student discovers the method of analyzing and "digging into" one such monologue, he will find others easier. The Duke is pointing out a picture to a guest in his home. The Duke is a malevolent creature.

"That's my last Duchess (*indicating*) painted on the wall,  
Looking (*a twisted smile*) as if she were alive. I call  
That piece a wonder (*pause*) now: Fra Pandolf's (*impressively*)  
hands  
Worked busily a day, and there she stands. (*Gesturing*)  
Will't please you sit and look at her? (*Reacting to question*)  
(*Grimly*) I said 'Fra Pandolf' by design, for never read  
Strangers like you that pictured countenance,  
(*Appraisingly*) The depth and passion of its earnest glance,  
But to myself they turned—(*in explanation*) since none puts by  
The curtain I have drawn for you but I—  
And seemed as they would ask me if they durst,  
(*Lightly malevolent*) How such a glance came there; so, not the first  
Are you to turn and ask thus. (*Bitterly*) Sir, 'twas not  
Her husband's presence only, called that spot (*quiet fury*)  
Of joy into the Duchess' cheek: perhaps (*throbbingly*)  
Fra Pandolf chanced to say: 'Her mantle laps  
Over my lady's wrist too much', or 'Paint (*mimicking*)  
Must never hope to reproduce the faint  
Half-flush that dies along her throat:' Such stuff  
Was courtesy (*quiet savagery*) she thought, and cause enough  
For calling up that spot of joy. She had  
A heart—how shall I say?—(*malignantly*) too soon made glad,  
Too easily impressed: She liked whate'er  
She looked on, (*passionately jealous*) and her looks went every-  
where."

*Stylistic Movement*

The Duke, in attempting to tell about the picture, gives an even truer "portrait" of himself. His characteristic movements may be suggested by line and posture. The extreme "I" consciousness may be accented by an unbalanced lift of the chest and head and by bringing the elbows into prominence. One should employ a sweep of gesture that reveals extreme assurance, wealth, position and self-esteem. These characteristics may be shown with the sculptor's technique of conveying the plastic attitudes of the body. The mono-actor is a portrait painter, too. He paints character through line of the moving or static figure.

*Suggestion Through Voice*

The rhythmic pulsations of this metric presentation must be felt by the mono-actor and inseparably linked with accentuations of voice and body. The first word, *That's*, points out and should be accompanied by a broad gesture of the arm and hand, indicating the focal point of objective interest—the picture. The next accent brings attention to the principal subject. The whole purpose and relationship of the poem are found, and should be established, through the rhythmic action of the first two sentences. The objective interest follows through to the subjective on the accent of *looking*; the accompanying movement should draw attention to the Duke's egocentricity and focus audience attention upon his smile and plastic attitude.

The vocal utterance can be a revelatory story in itself; the quality of tone and intonational pattern may suggest an undertone of control, a suggestively cruel passion to rule at any cost; an intense pleasure and satisfaction in forcing "all smiles" to "stop together." The pitch range should not be very wide. Other vocal variations can then be strengthened to bring out innuendo—by glides, definite satisfactions by a coloring of precise pitch intervals, by constant contrasts shown through texture or quality of vowel colorings.

*Staging*

May be carried out with a background of a cyclorama and subdued lighting—for these contribute much to the emotional and pictorial effects of a character monologue. The curtain drawn aside to reveal the picture of the Duchess, may be simulated at the opening of the presentation. A real bench may be used. But if a whole realistic background were employed it would have to be one of ele-

gance in order to create a full illusion. Moreover, if a realistic staging were used, the balance of the interpretation would be destroyed: the mono-actor would have to try to employ a technique of realism in interpreting the poem.

### SOLILOQUY

The soliloquy is distinguished by the fact that in it there is no attempt to suggest dialogue exchange with another character; the character muses aloud upon some matter of importance to him or upon some topic that sets him to poetic or philosophical dissertation. The *To be or not to be* speech in Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and *Cato's Soliloquy* by Joseph Addison are historic examples of this type of dramatic reading.

Much that is called "soliloquy" is in reality a version of literary monologue. Thus, the famous sleep-walking scene of Lady Macbeth, the various prologues contained in classical plays, the dream of Richard III that begins: "Give me another horse!—bind up my wounds!—," are all examples of monologue.

In his scholarly and valuable book, *The Lonely Debate*,\* Professor Houston Peterson points out that soliloquy is not merely a device through which a playwright presents necessary exposition to his audience; it actually takes on the characteristics of an inner debate. Sometimes, however, a character's fears, and not his reason, are uppermost; in such cases he tends to give vent to whatever troubles him most profoundly. Such an instance is afforded in Richard III at the end of act I, scene II, when Gloster speaks aloud beginning with: "Was ever woman in this humour woo'd?" An even better illustration is afforded in Henry VII, act III, scene II, when Wolsey learns that he is about to lose his honors: "Farewell, a long farewell, to all my greatness! This is the state of man; today he puts forth the tender leaves of hope, tomorrow blossoms, and bears his blushing honors thick upon him,—etc."

### *The Unique Value of Soliloquy*

Soliloquy contributes valuably to dramatic art. "Paradoxically the 'I' of this most intimate form of expression," says Professor Peterson, "usually has the effect of the 'we.' Unless he is a monster of eccentricity, the character, in the very midst of his profound isolation, is speaking for all men like him. He gropes not only for himself

\* Published by Reynal & Hitchcock, New York, 1938.

but for his generation. He expresses not only his private ambitions but the ambitions of a class or race. In some soliloquies the wider implications are obscure, in others the social echo is quite audible." \*

In soliloquy, as in all forms of literary dramatic art, indeed all dramatic art, the actor should know what he is doing at every turn. When he fails to understand or appreciate a definite purpose behind each line that is delivered, the presentation is superficial. Sometimes the lines of a poetic drama offer a problem in understanding. The conversational idiom, being new and foreign to the interpreter, meaning is often obscured by the metrical designs of the poet.

Thus, in Shakespeare, for example, lines are often read without expression because, to the interpreter, the speech has no modern-day meaning. But to the skillful reader every word must have meaning before it can be rendered vocally. In the first reading of a classical soliloquy, the student who does not understand every word, must, for continuity and momentum, arbitrarily give a meaning to each phrase. Lines will then be delivered with conviction. Although such a reading is far from a finished performance, it is much better than a half-hearted rendition. All too often an important sequence is ruined because the apprentice worries about a single word or phrase within it. One must bridge these gaps of comprehension by temporarily assigning purpose and meaning to the doubtful fragment.

It is sometimes difficult for the mono-actor to imagine what people were like in the days described by the poet. The remedy for this imaginative paralysis is to regard these people as human beings. First translate their talk into present-day idiom. For a line like "Here will I hold," one should substitute "I'll say this much."

Translate the following into present day idiom before attempting to interpret it.

#### CATO'S SOLILOQUY

It must be so—Plato, thou reasonest well!  
Else whence this pleasing hope, this fond desire,  
This longing after immortality?  
Or whence this secret dread, and inward horror  
Of falling into naught? Why shrinks the soul  
Back on herself, and startles at destruction?—  
'Tis the Divinity that stirs within us;  
'Tis heaven itself that points out a *hereafter*,  
And intimates Eternity to man.

\* *The Lonely Debate.*

Here will I hold. If there's a Power above us  
(And that there is, all Nature cries aloud  
Through all her works), He must delight in Virtue:  
And that which He delights in, must be happy.  
Eternity!—thou pleasing, dreadful thought!  
Through what variety of untried being,  
Through what new scenes and changes must we pass?  
The wide, the unbounded prospect lies before me;  
But shadows, clouds, and darkness, rest upon it.

Joseph Addison

## CHAPTER EIGHTEEN

### PLAY READING

"What an actor 'creates' is an illusion in the mind of the audience." ELIZABETH A. DREW

THIS ART WAS professionally established about a hundred years ago when a popular actor of the day offered himself "between engagements for recitals of play readings to select audiences."\* He met with considerable success both in England and America, and thus George Vandenhoff, Jr. became the professional father of the form. He forsook the stage when he found that, by himself, he could still afford entertainment while speaking to audiences about plays and play characters. Anna Cora Mowatt, who established the field, professionally, for women, gives an interesting account of her debut in her autobiography.\*\*

Play reading presents an inviting field for the amateur, and to the professional it is satisfyingly creative. Universities, colleges, high schools, private schools, camps, radio and television are all fields for the play reader. Every community welcomes the play reading artist and he finds employment in the south, the middle west and west. Play *reviews* are more acceptable close to New York.

Play reading requires two abilities: ability to create illusion, ability to cut a play. It utilizes stage literature in a form especially adapted to individual presentation. All types of plays may be adapted for play readings. The mono-actor's own inclination and ability decide the type of play—comedy, satire, drama—he will present. They can be presented with much or little impersonation. The types of play reading are: (a) Reading from manuscript, (b) Play reading in monodramatic form, (c) Actively impersonating all characters.

#### MANUSCRIPT READING

When reading a play from manuscript it is not wise to employ elaborate characterization. The reader's voice and facial play, to-

\* *Leaves from an Actor's Notebook*, George Vandenhoff, 1856.

\*\* *Autobiography of an Actress*, Anna Cora Mowatt, 1854. Both volumes are out of print but are available in most public libraries.

gether with slight head and torso turns, should suffice to make clear which character is speaking and to whom. Over emphasis on the visual would conflict with the fundamental intellectual approach.

### *Rely Mainly on Vocal Interpretation*

An audience is capable of grasping dramatic progression with such explanation as is given for each act or scene. Ferenc Molnar's *The Good Fairy*, for example, offers a dramatist's picture of an amusing type of woman. If the lines are interpreted with sufficient vocal skill the situations unfold themselves and illusion is created in the process.

Because reproduction of dialogue is the feature of play reading, the reader must suggest the individuality of the characters through variety of speech. In *The Good Fairy*, Lu is the principal character. As she puts it, the only mistakes she makes are when she stops to think. At times during the play she poses as the aristocratic wife of a highly respected lawyer, but she really is a waif who has lacked social advantages—and this must be projected, mainly through slips of diction.

The other major characters are more definitely typed. In each case it is necessary to create a voice tone suggestive of the individual; characteristic facial play is also employed.

### *Use of Movement*

Movement, in reading from manuscript, is restricted. One stands behind the music rack or reading stand upon which the manuscript has been placed. To simulate character placement the reader turns from side to side. Thus, when suggesting Character A, he may turn to the diagonal right; to impersonate Character B he turns to the diagonal left. This restricted movement is thoroughly adequate to imply character give and take.

In a circumstance where A says to B, "Read this letter," or "Here is your money," or any other speech which brings out some necessary action, the reader simulates extending the object. In Rachel Crother's *As Husbands Go* the husband and his wife's would-be lover get confidential during a drinking scene. Each character plies the other with drink and the reader, in each case, may take an imaginary glass and drink in pantomime. Some readers use large, simple gestures or none at all, others make the pantomime as realistic as possible.

Relative to exits, entrances and special business which is too complicated for ready reproduction, it is necessary for the reader to

break into the scene and explain the facts. These moments must be chosen with care; nothing more quickly breaks the spell of illusion than careless narrative insertions. Remember that the manuscript reader is consistently trying to create *illusion of scene*.

#### PLAY READING IN MONODRAMATIC FORM

##### *One Scene, One-character Reading*

The one scene, one-character form of play reading gives opportunity for more elaborate impersonation. Narration should be used only to describe incidents important to clarity, otherwise it impedes development of dramatic situation. Some readers prefer to interpret this type of play reading from memory, while others read directly from prepared manuscript which is held in the hand.

No actual dialogue exchange is attempted; all responses from unseen characters are implied. It is suggested below how a play would be adapted for this type of reading, first giving the original form, then the adaptation. The play from which these lines were taken is Victorien Sardou's *Divorçons*. Henri Des Prunelles receives a visit from his old friend M. Clavignac.

Prun. (*Glancing at card*) Clavignac: Show the gentleman in.  
(*Enter Clav., exit Bastien the servant*)

Prun. Well! You in Rheims?

Clav. (*Coming forward*) In Rheims!

Prun. But everybody thought you dead! Where did you come from?

Clav. Spain.

Prun. Spain?

Clav. (*Divesting hat and cloak*) From Spain. Took a stroll.

Prun. What a lucky man; you're a bachelor again.

Clav. (*Seating himself*) No, merely a grass widower.

Prun. (*Sitting beside him*) Pouf. What difference?

The following shows how such a scene would be prepared for presentation as a one scene, one-character play reading.

Prun. Who do you say is calling, Bastien? . . . M'sieu Clavignac? Well, well, show him in! Clavignac! You in Rheims? Where did you come from? (*Gesturing*) Take off your hat and cloak . . . You're from Spain? (*Jealously*) Ah! You're a bachelor again.

A comparison of these two openings reveals that this type of play reading has certain problems which must be solved. For one thing, lines must be written in to cover action which is physically impossible. Thus, the line, "Who do you say is calling, Bastien?" has

been written in to cover the business of glancing at the calling card. Again, Des Prunelles is made to say "Take off your hat and cloak."

In this type of presentation the acting must be greatly intensified to cover the deleted lines of dialogue. Thus, the mono-actor must deliver the inquiry, "Where did you come from?" in a manner which suggests that everyone has thought Clavignac dead. Implicit and explicit meanings have been covered in the chapter on *Creative Speech*.

Before attempting this form of presentation the student should gain experience through performance of one scene, one-character monodramas.

Mono-type play reading is most effective when the playwright's theme rests mainly in one character as in the character of Lu in Ferenc Molnar's play, *The Good Fairy*.

### *Dramatic Sequence Reading*

This monodramatic form of play reading is an expansion of the one scene, one-character type of play reading just described. Dramatic sequences permit the impersonation of several play characters, one at a time. There is no dialogue exchange; all responses are implied.

In dramatic sequence, monodrama dramatizes significant scenes through the central character who is further developed through the impersonation of lesser characters. In adapting plays for this type of reading one must be careful not to lose the focal point of the play. Miss Skinner's presentation of *Edna His Wife* is a good example. Here Miss Skinner impersonates several different characters. But the principal character is Edna and the audience is never permitted to lose sight of that fact. No matter which member of the family, or outsider, is impersonated everything said throws additional light on Edna. Miss Skinner paints clearly a portrait of a woman unable to grow in stature along with her husband.

An example of a play which contains several interesting persons worth characterizing is Clemence Dane's *A Bill of Divorcement* which dramatizes the misfortunes of a woman irrevocably tied to a hopeless wreck of a man because of the divorce laws of England which were not changed until after the war. This theme is somewhat abstract; accordingly Margaret Fairfield, the wife, must be treated as the play's chief figure, even while other principals are being impersonated. To give the husband and daughter equal prominence would reduce the emotional values.



Cornelia Otis Skinner as Pearl in *Edna His Wife*. Notice fatigue accentuated through angles.

#### ALL CHARACTER PLAY READING

These are most challenging to one's powers. More memorization is required, more impersonations are undertaken, and more knowledge of play cutting is needed. "All-character" is a convenient term of reference; it does not mean that every single character in a play is impersonated. Out of the eleven characters and "crowd of men and

women, boys and girls" mentioned in the cast of Ervine's *John Ferguson*, not over seven would be characterized.

### *Full Impersonations Are Projected*

Such impersonation may be carried far into the actor's art. Yet, there are limitations to be considered. Infirm or crippled characters must proceed without canes, crutches or wheel chairs. Care must be taken to use no property, costuming or special make-up for one character which would conflict with impersonation of other characters. By the same token, action similarly is limited. It is not possible, as in the prologue of *As Husbands Go*, to pour actual beverages, nor to drink them, because of the conversational exchange. All such action must be simulated.

In this prologue four characters are seated in a French café, having a farewell party. It is entirely practicable to impersonate all four. The difference of seating position means nothing. An audience willingly lends itself to the idea that a single table chair can, in turn, be the seat of each speaker. All depends upon one's skill at characterization.

Every bit of impersonative ability is used in this type of reading. One should create and write down all details which add to character pictures—sitting posture, stance, shoulder tension, head position, voice pitch, speech rhythm, timbre, unusual intonations, stress, facial play and mannerisms. As in monodrama, deal in brief character strokes, remembering that only the dominant side of character can be portrayed. An identifiable mannerism is particularly important here, where it is necessary that an audience quickly grasp who is speaking. Thus, A purses her lips, B furtively rubs his nose, C plays with her hair, D smoothes her dress, E talks in a monotone, F is a most forceful speaker, and so on.

How to cease impersonating one character and begin with another? Recall the convention described in manuscript reading, where the reader turns slightly from side to side in suggesting an exchange. The same procedure is followed here, but it is enlarged. The reader uses as much of his body as necessary to show a characteristic line of movement.

### ADAPTING PLAYS

Since all-character readings involve more knowledge of play cutting than do other forms, it is advisable to start with that. The

analysis will be fruitful for students interested in other types; indeed, it is necessary to absorb these points fully no matter which is the preferred form.

Plot is reduced to a minimum, character revealing lines are whittled to bare essentials.

First acts of plays generally serve to introduce the characters, to outline a first crisis (which comes to climax at the first act curtain), and to foreshadow the main plot. First acts can be cut greatly. But enough lines must be left to point the action and to give reasonable introduction to characters.

Second acts usually dissolve the crisis brought to climax at close of the first act; they develop the main plot; they expand character; they close as tensely as possible. Cutting must be judicious. One must be careful not to hack away too much at the timbers which support the play.

The third act treats the climax brought to a head at second act close. It answers every question raised in the play to a varying extent, at least. Every question of plot must be settled; no loose ends may be left. Third acts, on the whole, may be cut a great deal.

These generalizations offer a general line of procedure. Do not expect them to hold true in every play. All playwrights do not write alike.

### *Cutting Characters and Scenes*

When program time permits, let the play tell itself. Resort to narration as little as possible. Programs vary in time-length from thirty-five minutes up to seventy-five minutes. In a short program the reader will need to resort to more narration. Perhaps the entire first act will be reduced to explanation. He will, however, want to dramatize the big scene of the second act crisis. Perhaps he will also have time to dramatize a small part of the last act. Yet, only through narration can the substance of the play be held together. Minor characters often can be cut entirely and their important lines given to some one else without greatly changing the play. Some scenes develop only a point of character. This point can be cut, shaved to a minimum, or transferred to another scene.

Character mobility is an important consideration, as it involves exits and entrances and major pieces of physical action. To illustrate solution of an entrance problem: In Besier's *The Barretts of Wim-pole Street* Henrietta comes into the room where her sister, Elizabeth

Browning, is lying in convalescence. Henrietta knocks, entering in response to the invitation. How does one solve the door-knock and an impersonation of Henrietta entering—and still impersonate the chief character Elizabeth on the sofa?

Elizabeth reacts pantomimically to an imaginary knock. Lines are written in. She calls, "Come in." She "discovers" Henrietta, adding: "Oh, Henrietta." To bring her sister within impersonative range she further adds: "Come here, what is it?" From that point on, impersonation is simple.

When a character leaves the room the reader goes to the door in the guise of either character. The lines must convey the news that a character is leaving. At the door the reader, if he has not previously done so, switches to an impersonation of the character staying behind. In this role he bids good-bye to the departing person. Sometimes it is not necessary to handle an exit in such detail; but, as a rule exits and entrances both should be enacted as positively as possible.

### *Example of a Play Cutting*

The following third act opening of *Divorçons* offers opportunity to practice a representative all-character play reading scene while showing how printed stage directions must be revised to meet the reader's needs. Note how the reader, while impersonating Des Prunelles, "discovers" Joseph and Adhemar and how cues are written in to suggest handling of entrances and exits.

The plot is this: Cyprienne resents her husband's flaming past and his unexciting attitude toward their marriage. A virtuous woman, she has derived a thrill from encouraging her cousin Adhemar. It is a time when the divorce laws of France are about to be liberalized, and she appears anxious for a divorce. Des Prunelles has persuaded her that he is willing to let her have the divorce so that she can marry Adhemar. He invites the overjoyed Adhemar to come to supper that night. However, when Cyprienne finds him ready to go out for the evening she is not content until he takes her to dinner—"to prove he is not going out to meet another woman." The climax reaches its height when Adhemar, finding no one home, tracks Des Prunelles to a private room in a restaurant to consult further.

Three pages of the opening have been cut. The act starts when Cyprienne speaks.

## TAKING THE STAGE

CYP. (~~Looking about as she divests cloak and hat.~~) It seems you are well acquainted in this place.

D.FR. I used to be, that's a fact.

CYP. And you expect to become so again?

D.FR. (Shrugging.) Life is like that.

CYP. Hm. This is the place where you've played the gallant in those little farces?

D.FR. Now, now, don't over-rate me, my dear.

CYP. Those waiters-- Seeing me with you, I'm sure they take me for a--

D.FR. Perhaps my mistress--since they don't know you!

CYP. Then, you have compromised me?

D.FR. (Playfully.) A bit. (*See Joseph entering React*) Ah Joseph - what is it?

~~CYP. (Arranging her hair at mirror.) It certainly is queer. What are all these names on the glass?~~

D.FR. Nothing at all. Ignore it.

CYP. Why?

D.FR. The proprietor scratched them on with his wife's diamond, just to give the place a naughty air.

~~CYP. Oh!~~

*Suggest*  
JOSEPH. (*Entering, presenting a card on tray.*) M'sieu, there is someone outside who has learned that M'sieu has room eight. He asks if you will see him.

~~(Joseph presents the card. Another waiter enters, bringing the soup, which he places on a rear table and exits.)~~

*Takes and*  
D.FR. (*Reads the card to Cyprienne.*) Adhemar!

~~CYP. Oh, oh!~~

D.FR. Very well. (To Joseph.) One moment. (*Joseph retires to rear.* *Cross* To Cyprienne, whispering): Shall I ask him in?

~~CYP. (Nervously.) What? Not at all!~~

~~D.FR. Now, wait, my dear--~~

CYP. Never, never; I won't have it!

D.FR. But, having invited him to supper at home--

CYP. (~~Tears card.~~) Let him dine there. Why does he come here? He won't let us have our divorce in peace!

D.FR. Since he doesn't realize you're here, I'll send him off. Wait in there a moment. (*Pointing to <sup>screen</sup> closet.*)

CYP. (~~Obeying, taking hat and cloak.~~) Good. But, hurry. I'm so hungry. (~~Enters closet.~~)

D.FR. (To Joseph.) Show the gentleman in, *Joseph*

~~JOS. (Bowling, opening door.) Will Monsieur please--~~

~~ADHEMAR~~—Oh! (*Entering.*)—I may come in?

D.PR. But, surely. Come in, come in, *Adhemar*

AD. (He is wet through and carries an umbrella.) My profound apologies, my dear Monsieur. Am I disturbing you?

~~(He places his hat on divan—Joseph leaves.)~~

D.PR. It's true, I'm expecting someone. *(To Joseph)* You may leave, *Joseph*  
*(Pointing to chair.)* Be at home. But how did you find me?

AD. *I may put my wet umbrella here? Why—*  
~~*(Putting aside umbrella.)*~~ They told me at the club you would dine here with De Clavignac.

D.PR. Oh. Well, what's doing?

AD. (Excitedly.) My dear Des Prunelles, you see a man overwhelmed! It was agreed, was it not, that we should have supper together?

D.PR. I? Not I? You and Cyprienne.

AD. Yes, I and Cyprienne. I mean your wife--that is, I mean, no, my wife-- Oh, oh, our wife!

~~D.PR. Well?~~

AD. I arrived. No one to greet me. You had gone out.

~~D.PR. Precisely.~~

AD. And Cyprienne, too!

D.PR. No! Really?

AD. She went out after you did.

D.PR. Well, where to?

AD. (Piteously.) To see her sick aunt.

~~D.PR. Oho.~~

AD. (Agitated.) Did you know of it?

D.PR. Faith, no!

AD. I thought not. Well, I come from the aunt's. She is sound as a bell. And no Cyprienne there--any more than here in my pocket.

D.PR. (Suddenly.) Wait. You are speaking of Aunt--?

AD. Guerin; the widow Guerin of Boulevard du Temple.

D.PR. But, no! not that one!

~~AD. No?~~

D.PR. No, no; it is Aunt Nicole, who has asthma and is eighty-three years old and lives at ninety-two rue de Paris.

AD. But that's far! And the weather is fierce!

~~D.PR. (Moving to window.) Is it raining?~~

AD. ~~(Taking hat.)~~ Rain, snow, sleet--and no cabs!

~~D.PR. (Sympathetically.) It's the devil, eh?~~

~~(Cyprienne opens closet door to listen.)~~

AD. If I could be sure! Between us--do you have much faith in the 'aunt' story, eh?

D.PR. I?

~~AD. Yes.~~

~~D.PR. I don't know.~~

AD. The thing shapes up like a fairy tale--wouldn't you say so?

D.PR. (Shrugging.) I have no opinion. It doesn't concern me. I'm only the husband.

AD. But, as my predecessor, you can advise. Has she ever pulled this 'aunt' story on you?

D.PR. Not that I remember. Why?

AD. I thought she might have worked the strategy before.

~~GYP. (To herself, peering out door.) Oh, oh!~~

D.PR. You mistrust her?

AD. She's pretty artful. I've seen her tie you into knots.

D.PR. Indeed!

AD. She certainly led you a merry piping!

D.PR. I stood it, too. How about you?

AD. I? With me, those dodges wouldn't work.

D.PR. I fancy not.

AD. Not by a jugfull. I'm not the simple game you were. (Lordly.) With me, she'll snap to attention.

D.PR. <sup>*Smiling a smile*</sup>  
~~(A glance toward Cyprienne.)~~ That's the spirit!

AD. Where does the old aunt live?

D.PR. Nicole? Ninety-two rue de Paris.

AD. (Sitting.) Oh, dash it all! (To himself.) If it weren't for the four hundred thousand francs dowry-- But, there is it! (Rising.) Monsieur, I'm off! A thousand pardons. Enjoy your meal! (He starts out.)

D.PR. (Espying umbrella.) Your umbrella.

AD. (Retrieving it.) That's so. Again, thanks. ~~(They shake hands.)~~

D.PR. A pleasant journey! *Adhemar. Good-bye!*

~~(Adhemar goes out. Des Frunelles closes the door and proceeds to closet.)~~

### *Play Cuttings for Dramatic Sequence*

In cutting a play for this type of monodramatic readings, one should understand the French and Elizabethan definition of *scene*. In that definition, scene begins anew every time someone enters or leaves the room. In modern usage scene marks a complete dramatic episode. Applying the old meaning to the word a monodramatic

reading often cuts a single act into six or more scenes. Many times, in this form of reading, it is desirable to inform the audience of a new entrant and then proceed to impersonate that character. This gives audiences a complete introduction to characters; often, too, if a problem is being discussed, such procedure throws light upon it from every important character's point of view. *Outward Bound*, by Sutton Vane, is a particularly good example of play reading which lends itself, during the first act, to several scenes in monodramatic style. Several characters are apparently outward bound upon a ship they had no intention of taking. As the play proceeds one realizes that these are all shadow characters, that they either exist in a half-world or they definitely are ghosts—and having their first experience of a stage beyond life.

#### *Play Cuttings for One Scene, One-character*

Play readings cast in one scene, one-character form require no knowledge other than that supplied by this chapter and by the chapter on monodrama.

#### *Play Cuttings for Manuscript Reading*

Cutting a play for manuscript reading likewise is a simple, straightforward task. The following suggestions must be kept in mind when planning all cuttings.

Dramatizations appeal to the ear and to the eye, narrations only appeal to the ear. Keep the accent on the visual whenever possible.

Whatever is not dramatized must be told, to assure audience understanding of the play.

The audience must always know who is speaking. Use name tags if characterization will not surely convey this.

The audience must always know who is being spoken to.

The play reader must understand the play's purpose.

The cutting must always illustrate this purpose or theme.

It is not necessary that lines be written in to show where each character stands and what he is doing. Only when the play is affected is this necessary.

#### *Original Programs*

Sometimes play readers depart from the orthodox procedure of this art. V. L. Granville, for example, has a series of programs of

play excerpts, impersonated in appropriate costume. Some one else presents *Shakespeare's Women*. For the most part, material of this kind is now presented as a lecture recital. The chapter on that subject deals fully with this aspect.

### *Staging Play Readings*

In manuscript readings, staging usually consists of light effects. The auditorium is left in darkness. The only light upon the stage illuminates the face of the reader. This lighting is optional. Most interpreters prefer a better lighted stage which does not cast long shadows. In comedies it is particularly desirable to have a well-lit stage.

Suggestive sets may or may not be used in monodramatic readings. There is no gain in realistic staging.

In the case of the all-character reading, if the play is a one-set play, it is an asset to have the stage arranged so that background helps to create illusion. If the reader plans tours, this is not practical, as transportation is too great a problem, and a suggestive set is advisable.

### *Costume of the Play Reader*

Costume is impractical for the manuscript reader. It serves no helpful purpose.

A dramatic sequence reading should, however, make some concession. If the reader can get off stage during scenes some slight change in the wardrobe or properties is helpful in making distinction between the various characters.

In the case of the all-character reading—since all ages and both sexes are impersonated—nothing can be done. And yet, if the play were dealing with all Russian or Oriental characters in their own background, some slight suggestion of scene would be in order.

In one scene, one-character readings the interpreter has full scope. Since only one character is impersonated, one may be as realistic as taste suggests.

## CHAPTER NINETEEN

### POETRY PORTRAYAL

"The finest poetry was first experience." EMERSON

POETRY PORTRAYAL \* objectifies the experiences contained in poems. It represents the modern approach to the problem of making poetry concrete enough to win popular audience response. It differs from the literary monologue in that its material is subjective, whereas the literary monologue has been organized in more dramatic and objective form. The mainspring of the poetry portrayal approach is to make poetry appeal to the eye as well as to the ear.

"Poetry in essence is a passionate apprehension of experience," says Babette Deutsch.\*\* It is the student's business to translate this intense, concentrated experience which is a mark of poetic expression. Before attacking the problem the student should become saturated with the exhilarating concept of the importance of words—remembering that *words* symbolize experience. Such words are the poet's great tool. Lafcadio Hearn says: \*\*\*

"For me words have color, character; they have faces, pouts, manners, gesticulations; they have moods, humors, eccentricities; they have tints, tones, personalities.

"Because people cannot see the color of words, the tint of words, the secret ghostly motions of words—

"Because they cannot hear the whispering of words, the rustling of the procession of letters, the dream-flutes and dream-drums which are thinly and weirdly played by words—

"Because they cannot perceive the pouting of words, the raging and racketing of words—

"Because they are insensible to the phosphorescing of words, the fragrance of words, the noisomeness of words, the tenderness or

\*For the experiment from which this treatment evolved the authors are indebted to an article in the *Emerson Quarterly*, February, 1938, "Poetry can be Seen," by Miss Ethel Vienna Bailey of Emerson College.

\*\**Potable Gold*. Norton, New York, 1929.

\*\*\* Elizabeth Bisland, *Japanese Letters of Lafcadio Hearn*. Houghton Mifflin Co., Boston.

hardness, the dryness or juiciness of words,—the interchange of values in the gold, silver, and the copper of words—

“Is that any reason why we should not try to make them hear, or to make them see, to make them feel?”

It is easy to apply this magic power of words to poetry. The biggest barrier that stands between student and poem is “line organization.” The eye is often baffled by the procession of words across paper. “The prettiest things there are—must lie unused, unheeded utterly.” Repeat this line several times before proceeding with this experiment. Here is the line as it stands in the order of the poet’s context:

The prettiest things there are must lie  
Unused, unheeded utterly.

Seen thus it is more difficult to grasp. Why? Does the poet feel he must be obscure to be poetic? Ridiculous as the question is, it represents the opinion of a number of students. The best explanation is that the poet is concerned with maintenance of a rhythm. To fill out this rhythm he often extends the poetic line beyond what the actual sense seems to warrant. This puts a strain on the student who wishes to read poetry aloud. Once the actual meaning has been mastered, the interpreter’s purpose is to render as much as possible of the poem’s metric accent—and still not violate the meaning.

### *Recreating the First Image*

The student must lift phrases from paper and take them to the mind’s eye. The hardest image to recreate is the first one of a poem. If the initial image is grasped, the next comes easier—but only if the attention is disciplined to receive the impression. The mind should not be required to function too fast. Let it slowly absorb a sense of the first word picture; let the image be felt so deeply that the whole being longs for greater understanding and more details—and thus invites another image to share place with the first.

This process will come about easily if one is freed from consciousness of self. Let all the attention go out to the poet’s concept. His concepts after all are but the pictures which are seen all about . . . the sight of a bird in flight . . . a helpless infant crying in its coach and . . . the routine of the milk-man, delivering milk to sleep-swept houses.

*Discover the "Implicit" Meaning*

Seeing poetry means visualizing *things not unattended*; always there is related meaning. Below, the poet speaks of a lute. But, is he relating his entire meaning to the musical instrument?

It is the little rift within the lute,  
That by and by will make the music mute,  
And ever widening, slowly silence all.

Obviously he is saying that it is the first misunderstanding, the first quarrel—quickly patched up—which leads to the break-down of companionship and love between individuals. It is the student's responsibility to enter this domain of the poet and come back prepared to reveal the spirit as well as the letter of lyrical law. Thus, in the above excerpt the letter requires that one speak of a lute, but the spirit requires that the speaker project a suggestion of the poet's larger meaning.

If one cannot gain an understanding of a poem despite the nature of its line organization then, "the prettiest things there are must lie unused, unheeded utterly." For those who are troubled by poetry's "obscurities" there is only one solution: Read more poetry. A function grows through use. The more one reads the more one understands. The reading of textual interpretations of poetry and its meaning also helps.

*Poetry Portrayal and Theatre*

Poetry portrayal is a means of bringing poetry into the realm of theatre. It makes some use of staging, costuming, properties, lighting, but it is not concerned with how completely it can use such devices. Their use should be held to a minimum. Poetry portrayal is mainly a search for a means of translating and projecting poetic experience into visual terms. The poem, not the methodology, is the thing.

To succeed in visualizing poetry the poem must be seen as a *dramatic* rather than as a purely lyrical or narrative experience. Not all poetry lends itself to such dramatization. A poem, to qualify as potential visual material, must first of all be in a form which enables the interpreter to suggest himself in the role of chief character, as the spontaneous creator of the poem. In Robert Browning's *Home-Thoughts from Abroad*, the interpreter characterizes a homesick Englishman; in Robert P. Tristram Coffin's *Sitting Up Late a Winter Night*, the character to be portrayed is a country dweller.

*Staging the Poem*

Once one has mastered the poet's meaning the question arises: How to stage the poem, how to recreate a scene which will bring the lines into visual significance? This takes the matter back to the most fundamental question that the interpreter can ask: What *scene* does the meaning suggest to me? When this is satisfactorily answered all other queries relate to reenacting this meaning. Thus, one may decide to come upon the platform smoking a pipe and ready to soliloquize upon a past experience; or one may bring on stage a basket



A stylistic poetry portrayal of *To Any Dead Officer*. At Emerson College student mono-actors fill paid engagements with such material.

of peas and begin to husk them and then phrase a homely experience; or one may come on and pick up a paper from a chair and start at sight of an unexpected piece of news, which gives rise to a "spontaneous" poetic phrasing. Given such an introduction, the development continues from meanings extracted from the lines. The ending may be suggested by the poet or one may have to improvise something original. In any case the purpose of the ending is (a) to find a way to give the audience time to digest the poem's meaning, (b) to conclude the visualization in a way which permits a graceful finish.

Rare is the poem wherein it is immediately apparent just what direction the three stages, introduction, development, ending, should take. Consider for example, *Home-Thoughts from Abroad*:

Oh, to be in England  
Now that April's there,  
And whoever wakes in England  
Sees, some morning, unaware,  
That the lowest boughs and the brush-wood sheaf  
Round the elm-tree are in tiny leaf,  
While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough  
In England—now!

And after April, when May follows,  
And the whitethroat builds, and all the swallows—  
Hark! where my blossomed pear-tree in the hedge  
Leans to the field and scatters on the clover  
Blossoms and dewdrops—at the bent spray's edge—  
That's the wise thrush; he sings each song twice over,  
Lest you should think he never could recapture  
The first fine careless rapture!  
And though the fields look rough with hoary dew,  
All will be bay when noontide wakes anew  
The buttercups, the little children's dower,  
—Far brighter than this gaudy melon-flower!

In creating a scene for these lines it is easy to imagine them voiced by a nostalgic Englishman, but under what circumstances? Perhaps one might visualize him coming into the living room where there is a world globe and, first, strolling about restlessly. Finally his eye lights upon the globe. He walks over to it, sighs, and breaks into speech. Nor would he stand stiffly by it and recite the lines. Rather he would spin the globe with an impatient thrust. "Oh, to be in England!"

He has, perhaps, turned from the globe, but he looks back at it: "Now that April's there!" He comes toward it again. "And . . . whoever wakes in England,"—taking the globe in his hands—"sees, some morning, unaware, that the lowest boughs and the brushwood sheaf,"—looking skyward with a regretful smile—"are in tiny leaf!" Then, turning from the object as the words wrench from him: "While the chaffinch sings on the orchard bough—in England—now!"

### *Creating Dramatized Endings*

The above suggestions indicate that the problem of poetry portrayal is quite like that of other forms of mono-theatre: to find ways of intensifying speech and illuminating ideas and feelings with ap-

propriate action. Perhaps it is a shade more challenging here, for the interpreter often has to create the entire visual pattern displayed to the audience.

Where ingenuity has been used to open a scene and develop it, the interpreter finds that the same ingenuity must be applied to endings. Poetry often closes on a deeply spiritual note. Simply to turn and bow to the audience would break the spell. Ways must be devised which keep the illusion from snapping back to reality too quickly. Often the entire meaning of the poem will escape an audience if it does not have a few moments to reflect, to "connect up," to find the "larger relation." In the case of the poem just quoted, the best ending may suggest itself as simply gazing at the melon-flower (previously acquired) while the curtain falls.

Note the ending so appropriately provided in the following selection, Coffin's *Sitting Up Late a Winter Night*.<sup>\*</sup> With what "business" would you accompany the exit? As a test of the powers of visualization, write in cues alongside the lines which provide some impetus for action. How might this scene be staged?

Outside the panes, across the night  
Lie the little mounds of light  
Where the snow is on the sashes  
Full of minute diamond flashes.  
The crumbling hearth-log fills the room  
With a more tremendous gloom  
Than pitch dark itself could be.  
The quietness is like the sea,  
Coming, going, swell on swell,  
Inside the darkness of a shell.

A snapping ember strikes a small  
Treble chord. Inside my wall  
A mouse runs on some errand fast,  
And I sudden feel the vast  
World around my own world spread  
Which my feet can never tread,  
A universe of senses keyed  
To the rustle of a weed,  
To the dimensions of a knot,  
Alive with a different kind of thought,  
Going on four feet, not on two,  
Stretching its brain to every thew,

<sup>\*</sup>From *Stranæ Holmess*, a group of Robert P. Tristram Coffin's poems. The Macmillan Co., New York.

And out beyond my wall and house,  
 Beyond the rustling of my mouse,  
 Other worlds lean close with lines  
 Made of the needles of the pines,  
 And the circles that mean years  
 Inside the tree trunks, and the tears  
 Of golden pitch, the sheathed-up knife  
 Of the small seed's future life,  
 The haunting deathlessness of forms  
 Of grass and trees, the pulse of storms  
 And tides that time means nothing to,  
 The agelessness of frost and dew.  
 Beyond me patterns wheel and run  
 Out beyond my little sun,  
 Crystal, clean, of light and dark,  
 Gloom on gloom, and spark on spark,  
 Until around me I can feel  
 The turning of the mysterious wheel  
 Where all is ordered, all depends  
 On laws and music without ends.

And the light ebbs from my fire,  
 The fingers of the frost come nigher,  
 And I am sure that sleep is best,  
 And I am ready for my rest.

### *Sustaining the Tone*

Vowels are the musical tones of poetry. Seek to make them sing and radiate; seek to make them round, soft, languorous, appealing, or crisp, biting, staccato. Note the caressing, singing beauty of these vowels.

My love is like a red, red rose  
 That's newly sprung in June:  
 My love is like the melodie  
 That's sweetly play'd in tune.

Robert Burns

For contrast observe the close-knit, staccato tones in this excerpt.

Up the street came the rebel tread,  
 Stonewall Jackson riding ahead.  
 Under his slouched hat left and right  
 He glanced: the old flag met his sight.  
 "Halt!"—the dust-brown ranks stood fast.  
 "Fire!"—out blazed the rifle-blast.

John Greenleaf Whittier

The entire poetic phrase, as well as vowels, must be sustained. "The sun beats pretty hard on our roof in the afternoon" is a casual phrase that might be heard in any conversation. Speak it aloud casually, then compare it with: "The splendour falls on castle walls and snowy summits old in story." There is a sustained quality here which will not permit casual utterance. One must realize that the same is inherently true of every poetic line.

The practice of poetry visualization is the practice of sustaining tone. A poem is like a journey across a brief plateau; to begin such a trip one must climb to the plateau; to end it one must climb down. Similarly, the opening of a poem lifts one to a height. From that point on there is a series of continued emphases; there is no sense of "climbing down" until the end is reached. This is the true sustaining of vocal tone.

Poetry is like music; the poetic interpreter is akin to the musician. The musician must follow through a given composition with a consistent regard for time, the key in which it is written, the required loudness and softness, the proper balance of musical phrases and sentences. Only by giving intelligent heed to all these factors does he succeed in recreating the composer's concept. Likewise, the portrayal of poetry must carefully observe timing, the mood in which the poem is written, the effective volume, the proper rise and fall of intonation in vowels, phrases, and sentences.

### *Use of Stage Devices*

Poetry portrayal does not aim to see how completely it can use stage devices of set, costume, lighting, properties, make-up; yet it is undeniable that one or more of these assets are of great aid in making visibly concrete the meaning of a poem.

The more one emphasizes the visual, however, the greater becomes the possibility that the poem's true meaning may be lost. The interpreter must be alert not to desecrate certain poetic images by too much impersonative action. When that happens, instead of the poem becoming a subjective experience made vivid, it tends to serve merely as a vehicle for the interpreter's dramatic skill. Too much pause, too much movement, too casual speech—all these make for too much realism. The interpreter is only the representative of the poet; impersonation must not be permitted to swamp the poet's concepts by shifting attention away from the poem and toward the performer's too-brilliant interpretation.

## CHAPTER TWENTY

### MUSICAL READING

"By music, minds an equal temper know " POPE

MUSICAL READING blends speech, movement and music into a rhythmic whole.

Every form of art is concerned with *evocation*, "the calling forth of a response from its audience." In dramatic art, any presentation that evokes interest from the onlooker is on the way to creating an individual and empathic response from that onlooker. Music is an enormously valuable means of inducing audience evocation. And musical reading is the branch of mono-theatre that employs music to this end. It is not new (once it was called *melodrame* and still is listed thus in the New York City Public Library) but it needs new interpreters.

Those whose acquaintance with this art is slight can gain appreciation of its artistic and evocative powers by considering how effectively certain radio programs use music. When a dramatic sketch is in progress and a scene comes to an end, how is the listener prepared for the next one. It is the use of music that sets the tone, maintains interest, and often increases suspense. Music has been employed with impressive effectiveness in the programs of the March of Time, for example, suggesting rural scenes, turbulent floods, or some amusing incident. Hollywood movie technique also finds music valuable in scenes where the director believes that the actors alone cannot create a necessary degree of audience mood and understanding.

Stories, imitations, impersonations, monodramas, play readings and poetry portrayals all may be used with musical accompaniment, but only a portion of the literature of these mediums is benefited by musical accompaniment. The musical reader may take his material from any of the above sources, after he has decided that the content of a given piece can be made more evocative with the aid of music.

The use of music modifies to some degree the techniques suggested for the various mediums of mono-theatre.

### *The Function of Musical Accompaniment*

A sound approach to the function of music in mono-theatrical presentations is through consideration of its use in the dance. "It was in Greece," says Evelyn Porter,\* "that the art of dancing reached its greatest perfection . . . for a complete language of gesture came into being which included measured movement, gesticulation, declamation and pantomime, and could give full range to every expression of emotion and sentiment . . . The *musical accompaniment* was of *secondary importance*, being used as a background to regulate gesture and declamation and to set the tempo."

In the modern dance it serves as (1) background, (2) atmosphere or mood, (3) a means of supplying description, (4) a means of providing rhythmical accentuation of the dancer's movements. It serves the same way in the musical reading, and the interpreter should be as careful as is the dancer lest the music detract from the whole purpose. Each of its values will be discussed separately, but in sum the function of music in mono-theatre is: to enrich and intensify the content of a presentation and to aid in evoking audience response without interfering with the main interpretative purpose.

### *Accentuating Musical Rhythm*

One must remember the difference between singing a selection and speaking it. There is no necessity in musical reading for voice and music to sustain sound together continually.

The sun was shining on the sea,  
Shining with all his might;  
He did his very best to make  
The billows smooth and bright—  
And this was odd, because it was  
The middle of the night.

In this excerpt from *The Walrus and the Carpenter*,† the music frequently halts and lets the voice proceed alone. However, there are many places where voice and music blend in rhythmical accentuation. Especially in light, entertaining verse is this element of accentuation pronounced. The student who improvises his own music to go with selections by such writers as Arthur Guiterman, Dorothy Parker, Lewis Carroll or Thomas Hood will find the effect is en-

\* Evelyn Porter, *Music Through the Dance*, Chap. II, London, 1937.

† *Alice in Wonderland*, Le Gallienne & Friebus; music by R. Aldinsell.

hanced by such blending. As an experiment, have a friend hum the music of the old air *Polly-Wolly Doodle*, as accompaniment to the following musical monodrama.

## RETROSPECTIONS

O Kate! my dear partner, through joy and through strife!  
When I look back at our dear first day,  
Not a lovelier bride ever chang'd to a wife.  
Though you're now so old, wizen'd and gray!

Those eyes then were stars, shining rulers of fate!  
But as liquid as stars in a pool;  
Though now they're so dim they appear, my dear Kate,  
Just like gooseberries boiled for a fool!

That brow was like marble, so smooth and so fair;  
Though it's wrinkled so crookedly now,  
As if Time, when those furrows were made by the share,  
Had been tipsy whilst driving his plough!

Your nose it was such as the sculptors all chose,  
When a Venus demanded their skill;  
Though now it can hardly be reckoned a nose,  
But a sort of Poll-Parrotty bill!

Your mouth, it was then quite a bait for the bees,  
Such a nectar there hung on each lip;  
Though now it has taken that lemon-like squeeze,  
Not a blue-bottle comes for a sip!

Your chin, it was one of Love's favorite haunts,  
From its dimple he could not get loose;  
Though now the neat hand of a barber it wants,  
Or a singe, like the breast of a goose!

How rich were those locks so abundant and full,  
With their ringlets of auburn so deep!  
Though now they look only like frizzles of wool,  
By a bramble torn off from a sheep!

That neck, not a swan could excel it in grace,  
While in whiteness it vied with your arms;  
Though now a grave 'kerchief you properly place  
To conceal that scrag-end of your charms!

Your figure was tall then and perfectly straight  
Though it now has two twists from upright—  
But bless you! still bless you! my partner! my Kate!  
Though you be such a perfect old fright!

Thomas Hood

*Music Evokes Mood and Atmosphere*

Atmosphere and mood are not synonymous in the vocabulary of the musical reader, but they work together so often that they may be considered together. Atmosphere refers mainly to external, objective states—music suggestive of a storm, a country scene, a spring day, ominous danger. Mood has a more internal, subjective meaning—pathos, anger, gentleness, a sweet old-fashioned morality.

To illustrate a selection wherein atmosphere is predominant, consider the following lines from Keats' great poem, *The Eve of St. Agnes*.<sup>\*</sup> So concentratedly does the author deal with the cold that it is obvious that the music must likewise serve an atmospheric purpose.

St. Agnes' Eve—Ah, bitter chill it was!  
 The owl, for all his feathers, was a-cold;  
 The hare limped trembling through the frozen grass,  
 And silent was the flock in woolly fold;  
 Numb were the Beadsman's fingers while he told  
 His rosary, and while his frosted breath,  
 Like pious incense from a censor old,  
 Seemed taking flight for heaven without a death,  
 Past the sweet Virgin's picture, while his prayer he saith.

It is sometimes said that such poetry has lost its popular appeal, but the poetic beauty of these lines is fixed forever. What is needed is more interpreters with the imagination to devise music that will help evoke response from minds that need help before they can interpret.

Other selections that are aided by atmospheric music are Robert Frost's *The Code*<sup>\*</sup> and Vachel Lindsay's *The Congo*.<sup>\*</sup> When a drum or deep piano chords are used to evoke a picture of "Fat black bucks in a wine-barrel room," the latter poem creates a thrilling effect. The author has included suggestions for the interpretation of this work.

Any reading which gives an objective picture should use music that savors of atmosphere. A Southern darkey's cabin, a sea poem or a winter scene are examples of the type wherein music should suggest the locale.

Mood has largely to do with the dramatic, since lighter moods most frequently employ the element of rhythmical accentuation.

<sup>\*</sup>No published music.

Stories told with musical accompaniment are so often helped by the addition of "mood music" that the phrase has become a professional term. But there is danger in using music too sustainedly in the



Charlotte Crocker in *The Death of the Old Wife*. Note stylistic movement suggesting "the sun sank over the hills."

creation of mood. In the following story, Jules Massenet's musical piece, *Elegé*, provides an excellent accompaniment, but the effect is greatly heightened when the music pauses at appropriate points to permit contrasting effects. It is necessary, of course, that at certain points, which the student should work out for himself, the music and the voice should blend, thus deepening the dramatic values of the interpretation.

*The Death of the Old Wife \**

She had lain all day in a stupor, breathing with heavily laden breath, but as the sun sank to rest in the far-off western sky, and the red glow on the wall of the room faded into dense shadows, she awoke and called feebly to her aged partner, who sat motionless by the bedside. He bent over his dying wife, and took her wan, wrinkled hand in his. "Is it night?" she asked in tremulous tones, looking at him with eyes that saw not. He answered softly, "Yes, it is growing dark." "Where are the children? Are they all in?"

Poor old man! how could he answer her? The children who had slept for long years in the churchyard—who had outlived childhood and borne the heat and burden of the day, and, growing old, had lain down the cross and gone to wear the crown before the old father and mother had finished their sojourn. "The children are safe. Don't think of them, Janet; think of yourself. Does the way seem dark?"

"My trust is in Thee; let me never be confounded. What does it matter if the way is dark? I'd rather walk with God in the dark than walk alone in the light. John, where is little Charley?"

Her mind was again in the past. The gravedust of twenty years had lain on Charles' golden hair, but the mother was remembering. The old man patted her cold hands—hands that had labored so hard that they were seamed, and wrinkled, and calloused with years of toil, and the wedding-ring was worn to a mere thread of gold—and then he pressed his thin lips to them and cried.

She had encouraged and strengthened him in every toil of life. Why, what a woman she had been! What a worker! Always with the gift of service and buoying word. They had stood at many a death-bed together, closed the eyes of loved ones, then sat down with hand clasped in hand, souls in communion with the infinite mystery, hearts bursting with new evidence of the unstaying, unseen hand. Now she was about to cross the dark river alone. And it was strange and sad to the old man and the yellow-haired granddaughter left them, to hear her babble of walks in the woods; of gathering mayflowers and strolling with John; of petty household cares that she had always put down with a strong, resolute hand; of wedding feasts and death-bed triumphs; and when, at midnight, she heard a long-awaited voice, and the old man, bending over her, cried pitifully, and the young grand-daughter kissed her pale brow, there was a solemn joy in her voice as she spoke the names of her children, one by one, as if she saw them with immortal eyes, and with one glad smile put on immortality.

They led the old man away sobbing, and when he saw her again the glad sun was shining and she lay asleep on the couch where he had seen her so often lie down to rest while waiting for the Sabbath

\* Anonymous. Reprinted from *Evolution of Expression*, Vol. iv, by Charles Wesley Emerson, Emerson College, Boston, with permission.

bell. And she wore the same best black silk and the string of gold beads about her thin neck and the folds of white tulle, only now the brooch with his miniature was wanting, and in its place was a white rose and a spray of cedar—she had loved cedar—she had loved to sing over her work:

Oh, may I in His courts be seen,  
Like a young cedar, fresh and green.

But what a strange transformation was there! The wrinkles were gone. The traces of age, and pain, and weariness were all smoothed out; the face had grown strangely young and a placid smile was laid on the pale lips. The old man was awed by the likeness to the bride of his youth. He kissed the unresponsive lips and spoke softly. "You've gone there first, Janet, but you'll come for me soon. It's our first parting in over seventy years, but it won't be for long—it won't be for long."

And it was not. The winter snows have not fallen and today would have been their diamond wedding. Much had been planned for it and one wonders—one wonders—but no. Where they have gone there is neither marriage nor giving in marriage.

### *Music As Background*

All music used in readings is, in a sense, background: its general purpose is to give dimension to the art. "Dimension" here means enrichment and intensification. Music that is mood-building, atmospheric, rhythmical or descriptive might also be said to be valuable in establishing background. But it is with the narrower definition that we are here concerned.

Background music fills no specific function—such as creation of mood, atmosphere, etc.—but its employment does serve to give "body" to the selection. Oscar Wilde's stories may employ background music of this kind.\* Sydney Thompson occasionally tells stories, such as those of Guy de Maupassant, aided by such accompaniment. The following anonymous selection makes use of background music, easily improvised.

"How's your father?" came the whisper,  
Bashful Ned the silence breaking;  
"Oh, he's nicely," Annie murmured,  
Smilingly the question taking.  
Conversation flagged a moment;  
Helpless, Ned essayed another:  
"Annie, I—I—" Then a coughing  
And the question "How's your Mother?"

\* *The Selfish Giant* and other stories. Music by Liza Lehman.

“Mother? Oh, she’s doing nicely!”  
 Fleeting fast was all forbearance  
 When in low, despairing accents,  
 Came the Climax: “How’s your parents?”

Here, the music should halt and proceed in little bursts that match the interpreter’s speech, thus securing interesting accentuation. Background music may seem to resemble closely music that is employed for the direct values of its rhythm but this is not so. Material that uses strongly rhythmic music emphasizes that rhythm, but background music is mainly neutral in color and is accentuated only in places.

### *The Use of Descriptive Music*

The term descriptive should be used only for music that suggests direct imitation of things—barnyard sounds, birds, city noises such as auto horns, noises that suggest a man falling or hopping along on a wooden leg. *The Pied Piper*\* uses such music with charming effect.

Hamelin Town’s in Brunswick,  
 By famous Hanover city;  
 The river Weser, deep and wide,  
 Washes its wall on the southern side;  
 A pleasanter spot you never spied;  
 But when begins my ditty,  
 Almost five hundred years ago,  
 To see the townsfolk suffer so  
 From vermin, was a pity.

Rats!  
 They fought the dogs and killed the cats,  
 And bit the babies in the cradles,  
 And ate the cheeses out of the vats,  
 And licked the soup from the cooks’ own ladles,  
 Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
 Made nests inside men’s Sunday hats,  
 And even spoiled the women’s chats  
 By drowning their speaking  
 With shrieking and squeaking  
 In fifty different sharps and flats.

\* By Robert Browning; music by Arthur Bergh; G. Schirmer, pub.

*Summarizing Music's Function*

In this art music always performs a positive function. One important service it renders is making possible the blending of music, material, speech and movement in rhythmic harmony. Its other great usefulness is giving body, dimension, background to the content. These functions are always evident, no matter what type of music is used. The evocative values of music are constant, but one must be sure that the right kind of music is chosen. If atmospheric music is used in a presentation that needs nothing more than simple background, there is a lack of balance and a consequent loss in the evocative quality. To sum up qualifications:

1. Light material invariably makes use of music with a light, repetitive rhythm.

2. Atmospheric music is largely objective in the musical pictures it paints. Mood music is largely subjective and deals with intimate appeals to the inner being.

3. Background music gives body and dimension to a selection. Intentionally elusive and neutral in color, it must never fail to perform music's greatest service: the blending of speech, movement and material.

4. Descriptive music is largely imitative of specific and familiar sounds.

There are very few examples of musical reading content that make exclusive use of any of the types of music described; a story or a long poem may make use of them all. Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven*,\* for example, does so, as does Henry W. Longfellow's *King Robert of Sicily*.\*\*

*Blending Movement and Music*

Movement in musical reading, because of the importance of rhythm, is different in timing from the movement used in other branches of mono-theatre. The student has previously been advised to regard movement as conveying initial motivation for much of speech impulse. "Stop! don't do that!" requires the actor to effect some physical action before utterance. This is the natural routine of human behavior: one shakes one's head before saying "No" and smiles before uttering thanks for a gift. But, in musical reading,

\* Music by Arthur Bergh; pub. Ditson Co., Boston.

\*\* Music by J. G. Woolton; pub. Summy Co., Chicago.

movement is (a) delivered in harmony *with* key words and (b) both movement and word blend with musical accentuation. To illustrate:

"Split open the kegs of salted sprats,  
Made nests inside men's Sunday hats,  
And even spoiled the women's chats  
By drowning their speaking  
With shrieking and squeaking  
In fifty different sharps and flats."

The first stanza of *The Pied Piper* is delivered without musical accompaniment, and the first part of this second stanza is so largely a matter of word description that action does not assume an important place, but in the above lines the blend of movement, speech and music must be exact and finished. *Always* one must blend action *with* the illustrative word and *with* rhythmical accentuation from the music. This is a vital convention of the art.

#### *Realistic Movement May Be Used*

Music must adapt itself to the interpreter's speech and movement; the conditions are never reversed. Interpretation is bounded by nothing save the necessity to give esthetic pleasure to the audience. This means that whenever realistic movement creates the best effect it should be used. Stories and musical monologues make the freest use of realistic action. The following selection, by Thomas Hood, illustrates this. Cues have been written in to convey ideas of how realistic the presentation may be made.

#### NOVEMBER

No sun—no moon! (lugubriously)  
No morn—no noon—(shrugging)  
No dawn—no dusk—no proper time of day—(walking to table)  
No sky—no earthly view (turning book leaves)  
No distance looking blue (sadly)  
No road—no street—no "t'other side the way"—  
No end to any row—(enumeratingly)  
No indications where the Crescents go—  
No top to any steeple—(in a fresh tone)  
No recognitions of familiar people (half searchingly)  
No courtesies for showing 'em—(pointing, as if directing)  
No knowing 'em! (peering unrecognizingly)  
No traveling at all—no locomotion  
No inkling of the way—no notion—  
"No go"—by land or ocean—(all these, explosively)

. . . . .

No warmth, no cheerfulness, no healthful ease (music silent)  
 No comfortable feel in any member (moving toward fire place)  
 No shade, no shine, no butterflies, no bees,  
 No fruits, no flowers, no leaves, no birds—  
 November. (a chord)

On the last three lines one might start to walk with a rhythm that suits the words, making a circle that is completed as the interpreter stands before the audience. This is a most amusing reading, and though there is no published music for it there is no difficulty in improvising some.

### *Stylized Movement*

The term stylized has acquired such wide acceptance in the past few years that it probably takes precedence over "imaginative," a word that somehow seems more applicable to musical reading action. Stylized or imaginative movement is: action sufficiently strong to convey or intensify an image; action sufficiently imaginative to steer clear of the obvious or overly intensified. Such movement calls into play every part of the actor's external equipment, in order to secure variety. All action of the head, shoulders, elbows, wrists, fingers, torso, hips, knees and feet, plays a part in suggesting meaning. *The Highwayman*\* helps to make this clear.

"He'd a French cocked-hat on his forehead, a bunch of lace at his chin,  
 A coat of the claret velvet, and breeches of brown doe-skin;  
 They fitted with never a wrinkle: his boots were up to the thigh!  
 And he rode with a jeweled twinkle,  
 His pistol butts a-twinkle,  
 His rapier hilt a-twinkle, under the jeweled sky," etc.

The "highwayman" wears seven articles of clothing. Since the interpreter will not wear a similar costume, how might a visual picture be "pointed up" for the audience? Should one point successively to the hat, lace, coat, breeches, boots, pistol and rapier? To do so on such a scale would be to court disaster; the audience would smile or become annoyed at such obviousness; movement must be employed imaginatively. The hat could be indicated by a slight flip of the head, the lace by the merest movement out from the chin, and if the hand previously has been shifted so as to permit ready flexing of the wrist, the rapier may be suggested too.

\* Alfred Noyes' Collected Poems, Vol I, Frederick A. Stokes Co., N. Y.

The musical reader does not seize every opportunity to emphasize images through illuminating gesture or facial play. Art is selective, it chooses some details and rejects others. But the musical reader does attempt to tell as much as possible through line of movement. Thus, in *The Highwayman* the interpreter begins to paint the highwayman's portrait before he begins to speak; he does this by the line of vertical movement manifested. This line can tell more than could a hundred words because an audience always tends to respond empathically to the interpreter's position. Thus his vertical line suggests the virile, dashing brigand and the audience is quick to catch the positive symbolism. Reread the section on stylistic movement, page 73.

### *Summary of Movement*

The interpreter must be so in control of his actions that he never wastes a gesture, particularly not in passing from one descriptive movement to another. In musical reading not only movement but change of movement is important and must lend itself to the effect of the whole; the body must be controlled to prevent purposeless steps, nodding of the head in time to music, or repetitious use of the fist, forefinger or shoulder. When the content calls for direct impersonation or recital then realistic movement will be employed, but where there is no call for a high degree of realism then stylistic, imaginative action will be found to lend itself best to interpretation. In every case movement and music must blend.

### *Blending Speech and Music*

The spoken word, in musical reading, is dedicated to the same purpose as movement; it, too, seeks to blend whenever possible with all other rhythmical elements in interpreting the content of the material. Speech takes the lead in establishing rhythm because, in musical reading, it is closely identified with what is called "thought punctuation." Compare thought punctuation with grammatical punctuation. In the first instances there are pauses whenever the mind expresses a thought, a qualifying idea. In grammatical punctuation pauses are made in accordance with abstract rules that do not always tally with the pauses that are natural to the thought processes.

I think that I shall never see,  
A poem lovely as a tree.

The above lines from Joyce Kilmer's *Trees* illustrate a common prob-

lem of the reader. The poet has seen fit to break his line in such a way as to emphasize his rhyme. But the mind punctuates this differently:

I think  
That I shall never  
See a poem lovely as a tree.

Sometimes this song is given as a musical reading. When it is so used the musical pattern must change, must accommodate itself to the speed of the interpreter's utterance—as he in turn obeys the speed of interpretation created by his thought punctuation.

### *Finding the Tone of the Content*

The content of every musical presentation has its characteristic tone; it expresses one idea or feeling above all others. In *The Death of the Old Wife* the tone is restrained, hushed, delicate; in *The Highwayman* the tone is one of impending expectancy; in *November* the tone is whimsical, mock discouragement; in *Retrospections* retrospection is humorously revealed; in *The Code* the tone is simple, monosyllabic.

Finding the tone in which to key a musical reading correctly is like finding the motivating force of a character—and the same opportunity for a difference of opinion exists. Every interpreter cannot be expected to see the same values in a selection; one will emphasize the objective content and another will interpret the subjective implications. Yet the search to understand the tone of a selection is an attempt to understand its basic truth. And if the author has done his work well, the experienced reader rarely misses finding the true essence.

### *The Musical Reading as a Whole*

The interpreter needs to possess a vibrant animation. Imagination, voice, body must all act as a single, vibrant instrument to create and project the experience of the presentation. Inexperienced performers often spend time and effort proving they are at home on the platform or stage. Speech that is too "homey" or colloquial is one way in which an interpreter often sacrifices projective power to prove stage presence. This is a complete waste. One who is truly at home before an audience concentrates on creating and projecting the dramatic experience that he wants to share with his onlookers. Speech should, when necessary, be colloquial but even then it needs

to be so vibrant with content that, more than colloquial, it is extra dimensional.

Lento-  
mf

I have no past - no future - just Today

Today is too soon gone.

But I am young and free Today!

Today is too soon gone.

But I have health Today!

Today is too soon gone.

Today I want a job!

Today is too soon gone.

Today I live!

Sum

Today is too soon gone.

pp

A specimen page of *Youth* (words by Marie L. Whiffen, music by Eleanore Weddell-Roberts). Note repetitive effect of society's echo: Today is too soon gone.

The musical reading may be presentational or representational, depending upon the author's original shaping of the material. But

in realistic readings one must be very careful to avoid action so realistic that it seems careless, casual, blurred. Interpreters who carry realism too far prevent the audience from maintaining its psychic distance: thus they destroy empathy.

### *Special Equipment*

Staging, costume, properties are employed at will in the musical reading. However, as the musical reading is a visual art, intended for production before a seeing audience, the spectators should have something to see as well as to hear. Concrete aid from staging, properties or costume often helps to make the presentation more interesting.

### *Selecting Material*

All the larger music publishing houses in America and in England have a generous stock of plays, verse, stories and monologues. But it is only in recent years, through the aid of radio and television, that musical reading has again become so popular that new material is being added by publishers. Thus the interpreter will often want to devise his own presentations. In arranging material the vital question is: will music add to the value of this selection?

It will if the content is such that it gains from increase of atmosphere, mood, descriptive sounds or rhythmical accentuation. Many stories, poems and monodramas are dramatic units in themselves and are hurt by the addition of music. Browning's *My Last Duchess*, for example, seems at first sight like a monologue that is perfectly adapted for musical reading purposes. For one thing it has metric beat. But a little study will show that it is best interpreted as the author intended. Its subtle undercurrents and implicit meanings demand a unity of medium. It would suffer diffusion if music diverted audience attention from its subjective suggestions. The same is true of all the monodramas in this volume and it is true of verse such as Bret Harte's.

The play that serves the interpreter's purpose best is that which is poetic in concept, which is in blank verse, which lends itself to interpretation by one person, which has dialogue that is more lyrical than dramatic. *Manikin and Miniken*, by Alfred Kreymborg, meets these requirements. Also, there are Henry Austin Dobson's *Proverbs in Porcelain* and a scene from Gerhart Hauptman's beautiful play, *Hannele*, "The Death and Awakening of Hannele." Scenes from

strongly dramatic plays cannot be used. Yet the jungle scene in Eugene O'Neill's *Emperor Jones*, with its drum booming in the distance and with the frightened "Emperor" talking to himself, is extremely effective.

From poetry one should choose lyrical selections such as Robert Browning's *Pippa Passes*, dramatic poems such as Vachel Lindsay's *The Congo* and Rudyard Kipling's *Boots*, and narrative poems such as Alfred Noyes' *The Highwayman*, and poems that permit such realistic interpretation as is possible in Thomas Hood's *The Song of the Shirt*. Light verse is almost always effective, especially if the content mounts to an amusing climax with a real "punch line." One should avoid poetry that is too subjective—"over the heads" of a popular audience.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-ONE

### LECTURE RECITAL, LECTURE DEMONSTRATION

"Sermons in stones and good in everything" SHAKESPEARE

LECTURE RECITAL is presented partly as an informative talk and partly as an interpretative recital with entertainment values. All kinds of interpretative material may be combined with the lecture form. A few of the great variety of programs that are currently being presented as lecture recitals are:

A pianist gives presentations entitled: "How the Composer Works"; "Music Tells its Story." His lecture is interspersed with piano selections.

Another pianist gives programs which tell how a snatch of melody from one composition has been woven into another composer's work.

A singer presents each episode of her song program in costume and tells something of the people whose habits and customs are depicted by the song lyrics.

A dancer presents a dance program to demonstrate a talk on aspects of the dance.

An artist with a fund of anecdotes and a knack for cartooning illustrates the technique of the graphic artist. He interprets, in popular terms, the various principles of draughtsmanship involved.

These individuals have unique ways of bringing a new point of view to program work. They inject something exciting into an otherwise conventional and routine type of program. Almost any subject will respond to interesting treatment if the recitalist has some technical knowledge of what he presents. From an audience's point of view, a lecture entitled "The Dramatist through the Ages" might sound unpalatable as a straight talk. But, combined with a few dramatized play scenes, it gains a note of refreshing variety. The title, too, might be changed to a more dynamic—"Drum Beaters along the Dramatic Front."

The lecture recitalist unites entertainment and cultural experience. This double objective applies to all good educational entertainment.

*Types of Lecture Recital*

Thus far the most widely employed material of the lecture recitalist is literature. Poetry, play scenes, book scenes and story scenes are presented in dramatized form and the interpreter discusses them. The form of the dramatized lecture is similar for all types of literature. Below is a suggested procedure for the development of a poetry lecture-recital which would apply to other forms of literature.

*A Lecture Recital on Poetry*

First find a fresh and interesting approach. One ever-fresh subject is: what is the general value of poetry? Such a lecture-recital might be called: *Poetry for Practical People*.

Questions at once suggest themselves. (1) Has poetry ever justified itself as a practical thing for practical people? (2) What is a poetic and what is a practical mind? (3) Can one unite the poetic and the utilitarian? Such questions as these strike so deeply at the heart of the matter that they can be used as the basis for a three-part discussion of the subject.

Research along these lines will turn up more material than one can use. In answer to the first question one finds that the Egyptians, Greeks and Germanic Tribes, including the Anglo-Saxons, made poetry a part of their daily lives.

In tracing the second question it will be found that gifted men have pondered long over it and that they provide many answers of surprising nature.

The third question can be answered with an assured "Yes."

In the following outline a very brief synopsis has been made on the left side to show some of the individuals who have opinions about the questions. On the right side are the sources of material for a full program.

## POETRY FOR PRACTICAL PEOPLE

1. *Has Poetry Ever Been Able to Justify Itself As a Practical Affair?*

"When poetry was first made people used it. . . . They were sure that they could not sow wheat or barley, go out to sea in a ship, make their Gods hear them, get well if they were sick, or fight their enemies without poetry."

Joseph Auslander,  
*The Winged Horse*

## SOURCES

*Greek View of Poetry*, E. E. Sikes.  
*The Winged Horse*, Joseph Auslander.  
*Aristotle's Poetics*, *Classical Tradition in Poetry*, Gilbert Murray.  
*The Greek Poets* (Anth.), Nathan H. Dole.  
*Little Poems from the Greek*, Walter Leaf.  
*Classic Myths*, Charles M. Gayley.

The Greeks made poems as we write letters of thanks and condolence and as we send flowers to one we love or mourn and as we have music before plays and speeches at our funerals.

The Anglo-Saxons were better informed of the poetry of their time than today's masses are informed on the latest popular tunes.

#### ENJOYMENT

(A Greek poem written about 540 B.C.)

Enjoy your time, my soul! Another race  
Shall shortly fill the world, and take your place  
With their own hopes and fears, sorrow and mirth;  
I shall be dust the while, and crumbled earth.  
But think not of it. Drink the racy wine  
Of rich Taygetus, pressed from the vine  
Which Theotimus in the sunny glen  
(Old Theotimus, loved of Gods and men),  
Planted and watered from a plenteous source,  
Teaching the wayward stream a better course.  
Drink and cheer your heart and banish care,  
A load of wine will lighten your despair.

#### 2. *What is a Poetic and What is a Practical Mind?*

Max Eastman, in *The Enjoyment of Poetry*, says: "The practical man is never distracted by things, or aspects of things, which have no bearing on his purpose, but ever seizing the significant, he moves with a single mind and a single emotion toward the goal. . . . Poetic people are lovers of the qualities of things. They are possessed by the impulse to realize. They wish to experience life and the world."

*Enjoyment of Poetry*, Max Eastman. *Discovering Poetry*, Elizabeth Drew. *Defence of Poetry*, Sir Philip Sydney. *Potable Gold*, Babette Deutsch. *Desk Drawer Anthology*, Alice R. Longworth, Theodore Roosevelt. *Anthology of World Poetry*, Mark Van Doren, Editor.

Babette Deutsch, in *Potable Gold*, says: "Prose has intention, like a man walking toward a definite goal; poetry has intensity, like one surrendering himself to contemplation along the way."

## MIRACLES \*

Why, who makes much of a miracle?  
 As to me, I know of nothing else but miracles,  
 Whether I walk the streets of Manhattan,  
 Or dart my sight over the roofs of houses toward the sky,  
 Or wade with naked feet along the beach just in the edge of the water,  
 Or stand under trees in the woods,  
 Or talk by day with any one I love,  
 Or sit at table at dinner with the rest,  
 Or look at strangers opposite me riding in the car,  
 Or watch honey-bees busy around the hive of a summer forenoon,  
 Or animals feed in the fields,  
 Or birds, or the wonderfulness of insects in the air,  
 Or the wonderfulness of the sundown, or of stars shining so quiet  
 and bright,  
 Or the exquisite delicate thin curve of the new moon in spring;  
 These with the rest, one and all, to me are miracles. . .

3. *Can One Unite the Poetic and Utilitarian?*

William Wordsworth says in an essay. "The poet will be ready to follow the steps of the man of science . . . carrying sensation into the midst of the objects of the scientist. The remote discoveries of the chemist, botanist, mineralogist, will be as proper objects of the poet's are as any . . . if the time should ever come when those things shall be familiar to us."

*The Poet as Citizen*, Sir Arthur Couch *Science and Poetry*, Ivor Richards *Scientific Thought in Poetry*, Ralph Crum *Countries of the Mind*, John M. Murray *Life is My Song*, John Gould Fletcher. *Another Future of Poetry*, Robert Graves. *Thamyris, or is there a Future for Poetry?* R. C. Trevelyan

Says Lucia Trent: "Poetry is the most eloquent manifestation of man's age-long adventuring in search of spiritual fulfilment."

## ODE

We are the music makers  
 And we are the makers of dreams,  
 Wandering by lone sea breakers,  
 And sitting by desolate streams:  
 World-losers and world-forsakers,  
 On whom the pale moon gleams,  
 Yet we are the movers and shakers  
 Of the world forever, it seems.  
 With wonderful deathless ditties  
 We build up the world's great cities,

\* From *Leaves of Grass*, by Walt Whitman, copyright 1924, by Doubleday, Doran & Company, Inc.

And out of a fabulous story  
 We fashion an Empire's glory:  
 One man with a dream, at pleasure  
 Shall go forth and conquer a crown;  
 And three with a new song's measure  
 Can trample an Empire down.  
 We in the ages lying.  
 In the buried past of the Earth  
 Build Ninevah with our sighing,  
 And Babel itself with our mirth;  
 And o'erthrow them with prophesying  
 To the old of the new world's worth,  
 For each age is a dream that is dying,  
 Or one that is coming to birth.

ARTHUR W. E. O'SHAUGHNESSY

The organization of such a recital as this is simple. A few quotations suggest the direction of development in each section. Source books give material and ideas which bulwark the theme of the program.

Other poems might be selected to indicate the practical purposes which poetry served—chants for births and deaths or battle chants.

The excerpt from *Miracles* is a plea for all to find in everyday experience something which lifts life from its rut. The third poem, in line with the theme of the final section, is a challenge to the onslaught of a mechanistic age.

A lecture recital on poetry can follow any line that the individual chooses. But it must be fresh in treatment and close enough to reality to interest the audience.

The recitalist should never yield to a temptation to flaunt his knowledge. Research should be submitted in the most unpretentious manner save, of course, that the recitalist may be filled with pardonable enthusiasm and delight over his discoveries.

### *Plays as Lecture Recitals*

Play literature can be presented in many ways: (1) play reviews, (2) an analysis and dramatization of the interesting characters, (3) programs of historical or contemporary dramatists, with scenes from their plays, (4) discussions of social or spiritual themes with dramatizations, (5) interpretations of modern or historical plays with lecture observations.

Play Reviewing should have timeliness as its chief appeal. An audience is most often interested in the current plays. The chapter on play reading explains the cutting and arrangement of play scenes

and their presentation. The recitalist must decide which type of play reading is best suited to the chosen plays and occasion. Often the reviewer deals with more than one play, which means that most of the time is taken up with simple narration of the play's events. Only the most significant scenes can be dramatized.

### *Analysis and Dramatization of Character Types*

Such a program entails research. If, for example, the recital is to deal with Shakespeare's feminine characters it might be built around a comparison of women of today with those of Shakespeare's time. Some pertinent questions might be: Would the modern woman respond any more adequately to crises than did her earlier counterparts? What were the activities and philosophies of Elizabethan women? The scenes selected for dramatization should highlight the questions with which the recitalist deals.

Russian, French, Roman and Greek literature offer additional examples of interesting characters. Herondas, an early Greek author, limned some very amusing types which exist today.

### *Programs on Playwrights*

They require straightforward treatment. The vital interest in them is their contribution to stage literature. What is it? Is it an advanced social viewpoint, a striking style, a new technique? All questions must focus upon the individual's offering.

### *Dramatizing Themes*

Molière, August Strindberg, Eugene O'Neill, Maxwell Anderson, Clifford Odets are authors whose plays are based on themes of universal significance and offer discussion and dramatization material. Critics' reviews should be the starting place when organizing such a lecture recital of a play; estimates will focus one's viewpoint and serve as a basis for personal conclusions.

### *Books and Stories*

In planning the use of book and story dramatization the first question again must be: what is the focal point of the program? Here is a group of program subjects:

- Authors' lives and literary growth.
- Themes implicit in book or story.
- Questions of moral conduct.
- Specific matters of individual behavior.
- Interesting character evolution.
- Distinct literary trends.

These programs will divide themselves into two phases: the lecture phase and the recital phase. The lecture portion should be integrated, meaty, with a fresh point of view. The dramatic section will present no problem to those who have had experience with play readings, a sound presentation will readily suggest itself.

Secure a copy of Dickens' *A Tale of Two Cities*. Compare the scene wherein Charles Darney is rescued from his prison cell by Sidney Carton, with this excerpt. Note how narrative is pruned and changed to dialogue.

The door was quickly opened and closed and there stood before him face to face, with the light of a smile on his features and a cautionary finger on his lips, Sidney Carton.

"Well, Darney, of all people upon earth you least expected to see me!"

"I cannot believe it to be you! You are not a prisoner?"

"No. I am accidentally possessed of a power over one of the keepers here. In virtue of it I stand before you. I come from your wife, dear Darney. I bring you a request from her."

"What is it?"

"You have no time to ask me why I bring it or what it means; I have no time to tell you. You must comply with it. Here—take off those boots and draw on these of mine. Put your hands to them, put your will to them. Quick!"

"Carton, there is no escaping from this place; it can never be done! It is madness."

"It would be madness if I asked you to escape; but do I? Change that cravat for this of mine, that coat for this of mine. Let me take this ribbon from your hair and shake out your hair like this of mine. Now . . . Is your hand steady enough to write?"

"It was when you came in."

"Steady it again and write what I dictate. Quick, friend, quick! That's it. Write exactly as I speak."

"To whom do I address it?"

"To no one."

"Do I date it?"

"No."

Such scenes should take at least a third of program time and, perhaps, half. As a final injunction, be sure that the lecture recital is clear and that it does not wander away from its point. If a scene does not contribute strongly to the central purpose, do not use it merely because it is charming or dramatic. It must have specific point and value.

## LECTURE DEMONSTRATION

Those who have attended fairs, such as the Paris Exposition, New York, or San Francisco World's Fairs, must have noticed how widely and ably industry is borrowing ideas from the theatre; there is a most stimulating use of dramatic presentation while telling the story of industry. For many years, advertising account-executives have been aware of the rich value of dramatizing commercial ideas to win a sponsor. It is common practice to prepare a movie film that so tells a story to potential advertisers as to win quick approval.

Business people will gladly and quickly give their attention to a lecture demonstration. The individual who wishes to develop himself in this field should keep one fundamental in mind. every phase of the presentation must serve a practical purpose in line with the basic idea of the demonstration. Charts often play a part in the organization of these programs. Dramatic emphasis can be built by preparing these charts while one talks—that is, if the process can be accomplished at a dynamic pace. Many demonstrations involve the actual use of a sales product—office equipment, household time-savers, industrial gadgets. Striking lecture demonstrations of insurance sales methods have been staged. No matter what product is demonstrated one should build the demonstration in accordance with dramatic principles.

Every dramatized demonstration involves a beginning and ending. Both should be carefully prepared. Move from step to step with assurance; time the lecture to keep pace with the demonstration and see that this synchronization is neither so obvious and uninteresting as to defeat interest nor so complicated as to create audience confusion.

Some of the particular values of a commercial or industrial lecture demonstration are: the onlooker obtains a first-hand understanding of the product; the speaker is not obliged to rely on abstract description; important points that are difficult to understand when presented only orally are made clear by visual applications; consumer objections can be proven groundless.

PART III

DIALECTS



## CHAPTER TWENTY-TWO

### MASTERING DIALECT

"For a' that, and a' that, our toils obscure, and a' that." BURNS

THE VALUES and results to be extracted from a study of folk speech and foreign-English dialect are dependent upon appreciating in advance the genuine values of such study, in knowing precisely what dialect is, and using an organized method of analysis.

Every actor needs to know at least the fundamentals of dialect in order to reproduce successfully the suggestion of foreign speech whenever a play or a sketch makes such a demand. It is a fact that a growing American awareness of international relationships is resulting in more dialect roles being available in plays, sketches, monologues, stories and anecdotes. The actor finds new opportunity in radio and television and a recent analysis showed that radio dramatic sketches use approximately twenty-five percent dialect parts.\* Entertainments in clubs, hotels, camps, libraries and schools expand dialect possibilities to a further degree.

No special aptitude is needed for proficiency in dialect although, of course, innate ability helps. Furthermore, the study of dialect brings sharpened speech awareness and leads to a sounder understanding of what constitutes a good speech standard. The various elements of speech, such as rhythm, pronunciation, timbre, intonation, stress and syntax are each employed to this end. Recognition of a speech fault is often the first step in its elimination; therefore, the imitating of the speech patterns of another person often leads to awareness of one's own fault.

#### *What Is Dialect?*

It represents the speech variants of a language. The terms dialect, folk speech and accent all have a relationship in this study. Dialect is the most all-embracing term. It is also used to describe such baffling language variants as Gullah, a Negro dialect heard off the Carolinas, or Pennsylvania Dutch or French Canuck, heard in Canada.

\* National Radio Register, New York, March, 1939.

Folk speech is the term used to describe such American dialects as Ozark Mountain speech, Southern White or Negro. In Britain it covers such speech as that of Lancashire, Yorkshire, Cornwall or Irish-English.

Accent is used to describe modified variations of standard speech. A Harvard graduate, a Middlewesterner, a Brooklynite each speaks with an accent.

There is also the trade jargon spoken among various professionals, this too being listed as a dialect. Soda dispensers, Hollywood cameramen, engineers, criminals, for example, all speak with a profuse use of idiomatic speech that would make them hard to understand.

Dialect, then, in its broadest application, is the result of speech habits peculiar to a community or trade or profession or as the result of a speech carry-over from another language. In this sense foreign-English is seen as the creation of anyone attempting English while bound by the speech habits of his native tongue.

### *Some Speech Problems of Foreigners*

The foreigner who attempts to learn English is taxed with new rhythms, intonations, stresses and special sounds. If the student has ever studied a foreign tongue he can appreciate the foreigner's dilemma, for in the early days of study every language is a virtual confusion of sounds. The foreigner, then, is involved in the attempt to "unscramble" what, to him, are the foreign sounds of English.

His first concern is to learn the key words and phrases that convey his meanings, and fidelity to an English speech standard matters nothing to him until he masters the fundamentals. Consider the newly arrived Frenchman who wants to know where he can find "water and something to eat." He will ask for something like, "*watair and somesceng to eat.*" Again, there is the German who wants to phrase the idea that he likes the local school where he has installed his child. "*Ach, ya, goodt shkool,*" he manages. Neither his pronunciation nor syntax are of high quality; he is handicapped by old speech habits such as saying ya for "yes" and by unvoicing the "d" in "good."

### *How to Approach Dialect Study*

The study of dialect is somewhat similar to the study of a new language, save that one already is familiar with the meaning of the words. Just as in mastering a foreign language, the student must:

1. Attune the ear to sounds used in words and connected speech.
2. Hear the differences in the speech tunes and rhythms of the given dialect.
3. Catch the quality which stamps native voice textures.
4. Keep to the practice of only one element at a time.

It is too mechanical a process merely to memorize lists of words; such a process produces only superficial abilities of expression. Imitating a teacher is likewise only a partial solution to dialect mastery, imitating a teacher is an imitation of an imitator, it is a helpful means but it is incomplete and fails to provide the color that comes from actual, first-hand opportunities to hear the true dialect speech spoken.

A radio drama in Yiddish dialect that has held a national popularity for many years, possesses an actress whose methods well might be followed by others. Although she has played the role of mother for many years she still makes frequent trips to the lower East Side of New York where she has made the people of that area her friends—learning from them new suggestions of characterization and of speech. One should create opportunities to hear English spoken by those born abroad.

Improvisation is also helpful in dialect mastery. Study and practice should never be confined merely to line-by-line memorization of a script. Naturalness, assurance and flexibility are best developed by improvised talking of the given dialect part.

This chapter is designed to acquaint the student with the method of analysis used in the chapters dealing with the specific dialects and now discussed in detail. The method of analysis and classification of elements is the same as that used in the chapter on *Craft of Speech*.

### *Elements of Dialect Speech*

#### I. PRONUNCIATION

*Pronunciation is the formation and utterance of speech sounds.*

Vowels and consonants are pronounced in characteristically different ways in the various dialects, and their reproduction affords a great deal of speech color.

Vowel pronunciations vary because of (1) local speech habits or (2) because the foreigner has never heard of, or been used to, the vowel sound. For example, the long "i" of *ice* is given the local

pronunciation of *ahs* by the drawling Southerner; the same vowel is pronounced *oice* by the Irish and *ăice* by the British.

Consonants also offer pronunciational problems. The Swede, for example, is unfamiliar with our hard "j" sound and when he wants to use such a word as *job* or *jump* he tends to substitute "y" for "j" just as he does in Swedish.

Observe the vowel and consonant sound tables as presented, for example, on pages 249 and 251. The vowel sound table shows 23 English vowel and diphthongal variations. These sounds represent the vowels that a foreigner might misuse and some of them are mispronounced by every non-native. This does not mean that the student must memorize 23 vowel mispronunciations in each dialect. The Frenchman, for example, has difficulty with very few of our vowels. In the consonant tables only those consonants are listed which offer a problem in a given dialect speech.

### *Assimilating Sounds*

Very often it is the affect of one sound upon another (assimilation) that offers difficulty to the foreigner. Each nationality tends to connect the sounds of English in characteristic ways, and these variations are dependent upon the basic speech habits of the mother tongue.

Assimilation is the effect of one sound upon another.

It represents the glide from sound to sound.

Or from syllable to syllable.

Or from word to word in phrasing.

Assimilation is easy to understand and its action is fascinating. Consider:

(a) The effect of one sound upon another. A foreigner may be able to sound both "k" and "s" and yet be unable to assimilate them. Thus, the Chinese has trouble in saying *cakes* or *six*; instead he will say *case* and *sik*. Again, where the American assimilates the sounds of "t" and "u" in *virtue* and pronounces it like *virtshue* the British rarely use the "tsh" assimilation; instead they pronounce the consonant and vowel separately, *vi't-ue*.

(b) Consider the glide from sound to sound. The Irish do not easily assimilate the "r" and "m" in such words as *warm* and *harm*; instead they introduce a short "u" sound: *warum*, etc. In New York there is a tendency not to assimilate the "tl" sound in such

words as *bottle*, *battle*, etc. Instead one hears *bot-ul*, *bat-ul* or *bo'le*, *ba'le*.

(c) Consider the assimilation involved in the glide from syllable to syllable. In syllabics such as *report* and *sister* and in compound words such as *horseshoe* and *fireplace* it is conventional to place emphasis upon a particular syllable or word. Foreigners often fail to grasp this. A Frenchman or Spaniard, for example, will pronounce the above words with equal stress throughout the syllables.

(d) Assimilation crops up in the speaking of phrases. In our characteristic speaking of "now *and* then" or "take *it* away," we customarily slough the italicized word. The foreigner, however, pronounces each with equal stress.

### *Borrowed Words*

English is full of what are called "loan" words—words directly taken in from a foreign language. The foreigner who recognizes these loan words tends to pronounce them just as they are used in his native country—rather than in the way that they have since been anglicized. The Frenchman who hears *chic* or *bouquet* or *perfume* falls back upon his native habits and utters them with French flavor.

The student should know most of these loan words so that he may treat them accordingly when possible. As another instance, the German who hears *book* will tend to use his native pronunciation *buch* (with its guttural "ch").

### *Fidelity of Pronunciation*

One must not go too far in fidelity of dialect pronunciation. The reason is that untrained audience ears cannot understand pronunciations that vary too far from conventional English. The Highland Scottish-English, for example, is so full of vowel snarls, idioms and syntactic variations as to sound incomprehensible.

Artistic selection must be used; employ only that degree of reproduction that an audience can understand with reasonable ease. For years the most oft-repeated suggestion on the March of Time radio program was: "less dialect touches, please."

## II. STRESS

*Stress is emphasis in utterance.*

Misuse of English stress often gives quaintness to dialect. Habitual and conventional emphasis broadly divides itself into word stress and sentence stress. "The question of syllable stress or 'ac-

cent' is one of the most difficult features of our language," say Avery, Dorsey & Sickels.\* It is true that had English only one rule for accent placement the foreigner would have a much easier time of it. Unfortunately, the language is full of the influences of Teutons, French, Greek, Latin and Anglo-Saxon.

### *Syllabic Stress*

Our tendency is to place stress toward the beginning of Anglo-Saxon words: *handy*, *breakfast*, *pancake*. But in our French loan words the accent tends toward the final syllable: *caprice*, *bouquet*, *debut*, *chauffeur*. As for Latin borrowings, the accents shift: *sec-retary*, *municipal*, *curiosity*, *indicate*, *indicative*, *indication*

Practice has made us familiar with these evasive accents, but think of the poor foreigners—particularly the Russian, Chinese or Japanese—whose languages have contributed so little to English that they rarely encounter word stresses of native origin!

Methods of dividing syllables can change the speech effect, particularly as in Spanish or French. The French and Spaniards are used to pronouncing their syllables with a beginning consonant and to ending with a vowel whenever possible. Say these words aloud and note how the attack changes when the syllable begins with a consonant: *en-ergy*, *e-ner-gy*; *flow-er*, *flo-wer*; *brut-ish*, *bru-tish*; *char-act-er*, *cha-rac-ter*; *form-er*, *for-mer*.

### *Stress Values in Sentence Patterns*

Remember that in sentences stress fills two offices: it conveys the conventional, regular emphasis placed on syllables and words; and it marks the important key words. It takes the foreigner a little while to learn this first office; as observed under the previous heading, the shifting accents of our speech are a source of bewilderment. But it is also unlikely that the foreigner will show much skill in using typical American sentence stresses insofar as key words are concerned. The American tends to place stress on words of particular evaluation. Thus: "not *that* one but *this* one."

To illustrate how stress varies from speech to speech, note the following:

- (American) "That's the most *beautiful* dress."
- (British) "That's a *veddy* beautiful dress."
- (Irish) "That's a dress fit for a *Queen*."
- (French) "Zat ees soch a lovely red dress."

\* Avery, Dorsey and Sickels, *First Principles of Speech Training*, New York, 1928.

## III. TIMBRE

*Timbre is voice quality.*

Every nationality has an individuality of timbre. The student will quickly begin to recognize the full resonant Russian timbre; the flat nasality of the Chinese; the fluctuating placement through the melodic lilt of the Irish; the resonant nasality of the French; the clear forward placement of the British; the soft open Swedish tones; the sharp intensity of the Spanish; the round open vowels of the Italian; the drawling soft speech of the Southerner; the twanging nasality of some New Englanders; the heavy guttural sounds of the German; or the soft musical speech of the Southern Negro.

Timbre is so important an adjunct of dialect speech that many interpreters first attempt to recreate voice quality, when preparing a dialect characterization.

Timbre, of course, does not exist apart from voice. When breath vibrates over the vocal chords (thus creating voice tone) and travels *above* the larynx, it is affected by the shape and state of tension of the upper throat, nasal resonators, mouth, teeth, and action of the jaw, lips and tongue. Voiced breath flowing through this mold emerges with a tonal quality which is called timbre.

*Changing Timbre*

Every individual has his own characteristic timbre. In order to reproduce the timbre of others—whether suggestive of foreign or folk speech or of any other individual—it is necessary to change the breath focus or the normal formation of the mold. It is necessary to redirect the flow of breath through the mold as suggested under Tone Placement in the *Exercises for Dialect Mastery*. First the ear must be trained to catch these differences of timbre and then one's vocal instrument must be trained to reproduce them.

## IV. INTONATION

*Intonation is pitch variation in connected speech.*

Everything that closely pertains to the melody of speech is implied in the term intonation, sometimes referred to as speech tune. Each foreign nationality tends to speak English with its own characteristic intonational patterns or speech tunes. These tunes have three distinct features reproduced in foreign-English:

1. Each dialect tends to reveal a dominant pitch (high, low or medium).
2. Each has its own characteristic pitch range (the tones involved from the highest to lowest speech tones).
3. Each dialect makes much or little employment of tone inflection (word and sentence patterns that rise, fall, stay level or actively fluctuate).

### *Dominant Pitch*

Every nationality, as well as every individual, employs a tone to which the voice returns again and again, a sort of home tone which is so recurrent that it is called the dominant pitch. A little listening among a group of Frenchmen, Italians, English or any other nationality will demonstrate that all the voices of a given nationality tend to speak oftenest within a given tonal area and to return to a particular tone.

The Chinese and Japanese consistently employ the voice in the highest range. French is also quite high. The comparative downward range of the dominant pitch is, from this point, Italian, Cockney, Spanish, Irish, British, German, Scots, American, Greek, Scandinavian, and Russian. Both Yiddish and Negro dialects reveal wide extremes in the employment of a dominant pitch. Thus, the high Negro voice is comparable to the Chinese and the low Negro voice is deeper in intonation than the Russian. A high Yiddish pitch is close to French and the low is close to Scandinavian.\*

### *Range of Intonation*

"It is a noteworthy fact," says Jones, "that most people in speaking reach notes much higher and much lower than they can sing." † Although this apparently is true it should not be taken to mean that all people constantly use an extreme intonational range. Indeed, although some dialects reveal a wide pitch range others are so limited in tonal area as to be quite monotonic—as is true among Scandinavians as a whole.

It is interesting and valuable to compare the following tables. The table on the left suggests the dominant pitch of various dialects and that on the right suggests the varying degree of tonal range. Number one, the Irish, contains the greatest tonal range and the Oriental contains the least.

\* This table is not fixed; one must allow for individual variations.

† Daniel Jones, *Outlines of English Phonetics*, Cambridge, 1932.

<i>Dominant Pitch</i>	<i>Tonal Area</i>
Chinese	Irish
Japanese	Negro
French	Yiddish
Italian	Cockney
Cockney	French
Spanish	Italian
Irish	Spanish
British	British
Penna. Dutch	Greek
German	Penna. Dutch
Scots	German
American	American
Greek	Russian
Scandinavian	Scots
Russian	Scandinavian
Yiddish and Negro vary	Oriental

### *Degree of Inflection*

It is a surprising fact that men often use a wider pitch range than do women; a masculine voice may, at times, cover more than two octaves, while a feminine voice covers a little less. Women, however, inflect their words much more than do men.

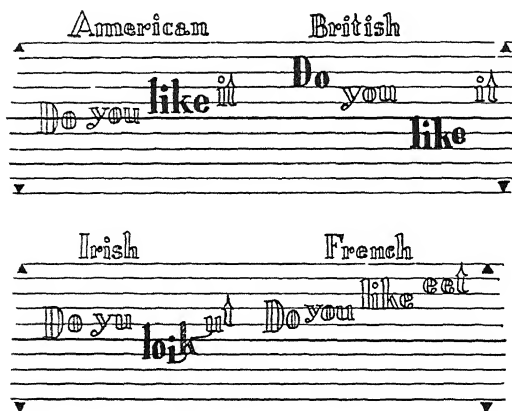
Every dialect, of course, has an upward and downward intonation and inflection, used in questions and final statements. Dialects will be found to reveal characteristic tonal patterns that (a) tend to inflect upward (b) or downward (c) or levelly (d) or are possessed of unusual fluctuations.

- (a) An example of a dialect that makes much use of upward inflection is French.
- (b) An example of a dialect that makes much use of downward inflection is German.
- (c) An example of a dialect that makes much use of level intonation is Chinese or Swedish.
- (d) An example of a dialect that makes much use of fluctuating tones is Irish or Cockney.

### *Method of Recording Intonation*

To summarize with regard to intonation, it will be found that each dialect has its characteristically dominant pitch, its own pitch range and its own favorite types of tonal patterns or speech tunes. The method of recording intonation as used in this text conveys something of all three intonational qualifications; indeed, the aim is

to suggest characteristic stresses as well. Observe the following chart.



The lines represent a musical staff and a range of about two octaves. The heavy median line suggests the dominant pitch of the American voice—about middle C—and gives an idea of how other dialects contrast with it. Give shaded letters the most stress. In subsequent charts the lines are eliminated, save the median line, and only top and bottom limiting marks are used.

## V. RHYTHM

*Rhythm is time and pulsation values applied to connected speech.*

Rhythm is one of the most fascinating elements of dialect. Take for example the staccato speech of the Scot; anyone interested in exploring all the factors of dialect will readily be struck by the bare, bleak speech of the Scot and the fact that his homeland is rugged and challenging—like his speech. Again one can readily fancy a relationship between the leisurely humor of the real Irishman and his speech that is so rich in an easy, flowing, genial pace. There is, in short, an undeniable relationship between the time and pulsation factors of dialect and the temperament of the given nationality.

The time and pulsation values of dialect speech are divisible into factors of general speech tempo, characteristic phrase groupings and characteristic pause.

### *Tempo*

Each dialect tends to fall into a grouping of pace that is fast, slow or moderate. The Romance languages, Italian, Spanish or

French, tend to maintain a fast pace. A Slavic tongue, such as Russian, is much slower.

Tempo is affected by vowel pronunciation. Speech is slowed, for example, by the triphthongs of the Negro and the characteristic drawling of the Southern White. Languages with monothongs predominant tend to have quicker tempo—as among the French.

Of Russian, Boyanus says, "Russians learning English fail to make long vowels long enough and short vowels short enough." \*

### *Phrasing, Pausing*

*Phrasing is word grouping.* But pause is more than mere absence of voice; in every type of interpretative speech work regard pause as *the pulsating interval of silence that makes phrasing effective or ineffective.*

The clipped consonants and factual phrasing of the Scot creates an effect of short pauses and marked groupings. The Scot needs to talk only a short time in order to give his speech the suggestion of staccato quality. This contrasts with the Irish; their speech is seldom broken by pause but instead maintains an easy flowing pace. This creates an effect of accelerated rhythm, of speed.

### *Measured Beat*

To the factors of pace, phrasing and pause must be added a consideration of beat. Beat was previously spoken of under stress and attention was called to syllabic stress or beat and to the emphasis derived from word order. These factors make themselves felt in rhythm. In rhythm beat might be called rhythmic accent.

Articulation of consonants contributes a share to the pulsating factor of speech. The Spanish rhythmic beat, for example, results from a noticeable staccato effect created by the strong strokes of jaw, lips and tongue used in consonant formation. On the other hand, Cockney folk use their articulative agents more lazily and their slurred action dulls the consonantal stroke and, hence, pulsation.

### *Summarizing Rhythm*

Pace of speech is only derived from continued, connected utterance. One cannot acquire characteristic dialect rhythms simply by practicing isolated words; whole sentences must be spoken.

Wherever phrasing is a particular factor—as in Greek—it is

\* S. C. Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*, London, 1935.

emphasized in its appropriate chapter, for word groups can contribute much to a given dialect rhythm.

Pause, on occasion, is also highly important—especially in such a dialect as Russian or Swedish or Cockney.

Beat, it must be repeated, is only fully noticeable in continued, connected utterance. It is largely derived from characteristic emphasis—syllabic stress and word order. In some dialects a sharpened vowel attack (as in French) contributes much and in others a consonantal attack (as in British and Spanish) plays quite a part.

## VI. SYNTAX

*Dialect syntax is ungrammatical word order or improper word substitution.*

Dialect is often made colorful by odd arrangements of words which run counter to our conventional usage. Such unusual syntax is particularly likely to be the product of those foreigners whose native grammar differs considerably from English. Thus, the Russians have no rigid grammar and are capable of producing weird word combinations while learning our speech, such as: "*How strangely changes, how deceives life.*" The Germans, since they are accustomed to place action words at sentence endings, often shift verbs to the same position when speaking English: "*Will you the butter get?*"

## PRACTICE WORK

Make up charts for recording discerned variations in speech. Listen to people on the street, in broadcasts, plays, movies, etc. Record observations according to suggestions and constantly attempt reproduction through conversation. Attune ear to one element at a time. Start with the one you are most aware of.

### *Suggestive Chart to Use with All Dialects*

#### *Rhythm*

1. General tempo and duration values
  - fast, slow, moderate, varied—
  - vowels—lengthened, shortened—
  - assimilation—dragged, clean cut
2. Accent or beat
  - marked, weak, sharp, staccato—
  - variations in syllabic, word, or sentence stress

*Intonation*

1. Dominant pitch  
    high, low, medium
2. Range  
    wide, limited, moderate, monotonic
3. Tune patterns  
    rising-falling, falling-rising, level—  
    word—inflection, change of pitch, level—  
    graphs of sentences

*Timbre*

1. General quality effect  
    nasal, resonant, flat, metallic, round
2. Breath focus  
    foreward, back, head, chest, throat, nose, soft palate

*Pronunciation*

1. Outstanding variations or individuality of vowels  
    recorded vowels
2. Consonant handling  
    clean cut, slovenly  
    record consonants with outstanding features—dentalized,  
    palatalized
3. Assimilation  
    record methods of connecting sounds in speech  
    special sounds that stamp variations.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-THREE

### BASIC EQUIPMENT FOR DIALECT MASTERY

THIS CHAPTER defines the terms which are important to dialect and folk speech reproduction and which classify and analyze sounds and variations to be used in dialects. Although these pages are intended mainly for reference they should be studied intensively by those whose understanding of the speech mechanism is at all vague.

*Standard Speech.* A term used to signify authoritatively recognized American speech. Any variations are herein treated as folk dialects, sectional accents, British, or foreign-English dialects.

*English.* Used here to denote the entire speech as a language, irrespective of its quality.

*Oral Sounds.* Those formed by voiced or unvoiced breath articulated in the mouth. Tone color depends upon the mouth formation.\*

*Nasal Sounds.* Produced by emission through the nasal chambers. A free passage is effected by lowering the soft palate and uvula and extending nostrils. English has no nasal vowels as do certain foreign tongues. Inadvertant nasalization of vowels may often occur. English does have the nasal consonants "m-n-ng."

*Voiced and Unvoiced Sounds.* Voiced sounds are produced when the vocal cords set outgoing breath vibrating, thus emitting vocalized breath. Unvoiced sounds lack such vocalization. The consonant "p" is an example of an unvoiced sound. Its companion "b" is an example of voiced sound. All vowels are voiced, as are many consonants. (See voiced and unvoiced consonants.)

*Open Sounds, Close Sounds.* These are often called "tense" and "relaxed" sounds. This definition applies to vowel sound production and its relation to the size and shape of the oral and pharyngeal

\* Bloomfield, Leonard, *Language*, Chapter II. Henry Holt & Co., New York, 1933.

cavity. A sound such as "ä" in *father* demonstrates a most "open" degree. An example of a "close" sound is "ē" as in *speed* (tongue "close" to hard palate).

This handbook uses the terms to suggest the relative degree of tension or relaxation in the formation of vowels. Thus, it would be said that British vowels are formed more tensely than American vowels—which tend toward a more open, relaxed formation.

*Vowel.* A sound produced when voiced breath flows freely and without obstruction through a mold.

*Consonant.* A sound produced by partially or wholly obstructing the passage of breath and voice.

*Vowels Formed with Tongue.* Vowels are formed with the aid of front, middle and back of the tongue.

The front of the tongue placed in relation to the fore part of the hard palate helps form the molds for front vowels. American front vowel sounds are: ē-ī-ä-ä. The two extremes of "ē" and "ä" are common to all languages. It is the many possible variations between these sounds which require observation and practice in mastery of dialect speech.

The back of the tongue placed in relation to the soft palate creates molds for back vowels. American back vowel sounds are "ōō-ōō-ō-ō." Dialect speech shows much variation between "ōō" and "ō."

The middle part of the tongue raises or lowers in relation to the central part of the hard palate in forming molds for middle vowels. The middle vowels of American speech are "ū" as in *but* and the "ir" sound of the *bird-world-heard* group and also the "ē" sound as in *mothēr*. These sounds offer difficulties to many foreigners—with the result that they make substitutions from their native speech.

*Rounded and Unrounded Lip Vowels.* Lips are rounded most extremely for the "ōō" sound as in *food*. Unround the lips one degree in forming each of these sounds: ō-ā-ō-ä. The "ä" should be produced with the lips quite open.

Of the unrounded sounds we find "ē" widening the lips most extremely. There is slight relaxation in each of these unrounded vowels: ē-ä-ä-ī.

Lip relaxation or tension creates many characteristic vowel sound effects in dialect.

*Monothong* (vowel). A single, pure vowel sound. Our monothongs are: ē-ī-ě-â-ă-ō-ō-ū. Several foreign languages as, for example, the Spanish—use only pure vowels.

*Diphthong*. When the vowel mold is not sustained throughout vocalization a glide appears which is known as a vanishing sound. These double-sound vowels are called diphthongs. Diphthongs are: ā-ī-ō-ō-ū. Use of “r” with a vowel as in *orb*, generally causes a diphthongal effect upon the vowel which precedes it.

Diphthongs are difficult for many foreigners. In some dialects over-diphthongization is noticeable.

In standard speech the glide or vanishing sound has a falling stress. An exception is the “ū” of *music*. Here the initial sound has less value than the glide. Foreigners often misplace stress on the glide sound, or give equal value to both sounds.

*Triphthong*. When three vowels are sounded together with a peak of prominence on one of the three, the result is a triphthong. We have none of these in standard speech but they are common in folk speech and a few dialects.

*Voiced and Unvoiced Consonants*. Every unvoiced or breath consonant (save aspirate “h”) has a voiced companion sound. In standard speech these are articulated with the same formation, but the emission of breath is stronger in the unvoiced sound. (More breath in “p” for example than in “b”.) Thus: p-b, t-d, k-g, f-v, s-z, sh-zh, wh-w, th (breathed), th (voiced). In some dialects these companion sounds are interchangeable, particularly in German and Yiddish.

*Nasal Consonants or Semi-vowels*. Emitted through the nasal chambers. They are: m-n-ng. These consonants (together with “l” and some “r” sounds) are the only ones which can be sustained with pitch. Hence they are called semi-vowels. “ng” receives various dialectal pronunciations.

*Oral Consonants*. Emitted through the mouth. Consider them as articulatory strokes leading into the vowel sounds of words. Some dialects call for stroke precision (as Spanish), others manifest slack formation (as Chinese).

*Consonants Formed with Lips (Labials)*. Some English consonants are formed by stopping or restricting breath passage with one or both

lips. The labio-dental sounds of "f-v" are articulated with the aid of the lower lip and upper teeth. Both lips are used for the bi-labial group of "p-b-m-wh-w." This is not necessarily true in dialect.

Germans, for example, do not use both lips in pronouncing "w." Instead they place the upper teeth inside the lower lip, so to speak, and emit a sound similar to English "v." Thus *wohl* is pronounced *vohl* and suggests the tendency to pronounce *well* as *vell*.

*Tongue Consonants.* The tip of the tongue in relation to the teeth ridge articulates the English post-dental group of "t-d-l-n-s-sh-z-zh" and initial "r" sound.

The tongue tip touching the cutting edge of the upper teeth forms dental sounds; thus, "th" as in *thing*, and "th" as in *this*.

The front of the tongue approximating the hard palate creates the palatal sound of "y."

The back of the tongue articulates with the soft palate for the velar (ie., soft palate) sounds of "k-g-ng."

*Plosives.* Consonant stops produced by a complete closure followed by an explosive sound. The plosives are "p-b-t-ch-d-dzh-k-g."

This action may be effected by the lips "p-b", tongue tip "t-ch-d-dzh" or back of the tongue "k-g."

Variations of standard pronunciation of these sounds may be caused by differences in placement of the articulative agents or in the method of emitting sound.

In standard speech, plosives are quick strokes leading directly into the next sound: *borrow*. If the stop is not completely closed, a plosive may be changed to a fricative. Spaniards and Germans, for example, tend to do this with the bi-labial "b." The lips are not firmly closed and the opening slow stroke causes friction which creates a sound similar to "v." Note German pronunciation of *back* which is sound spelled: *brack*. The Spaniard would pronounce the consonant the same way—though, of course, there is a vowel variation in relative word pronunciations.

*Fricatives.* These are produced by the friction of breath passing through a narrow, incomplete closure. The sounds are "f-v-th" (voiced and unvoiced), "s-z-sh-zh." Also the aspirate "h" sound.

Dialect variations in this consonantal group are due principally to a difference in placement of lips or tongue in relation to teeth.

"f" and "v" in standard speech are formed by the lower lip

pressed against the upper teeth. The Yiddish often change these dental fricatives to bi-labial fricatives because articulation is not firm.

"th," voiced and unvoiced, calls for tongue placement between the teeth. The French tend to change these fricatives to sibilant or plosive sounds: "s" and "z" or "t" and "d."

"h" is a pure breath or aspirate sound in English. It is generally classed as a fricative produced by friction of air passing through the glottis.

There are many possible varieties of "h" sounds. Those who speak a Romance language have particular trouble in rendering English pronunciation. The French and Italians generally omit it. Spaniards sound it as a velar fricative, bringing the friction up to the soft palate. The Greek "h" is pronounced a little farther back and is accompanied by more mouth opening.

Most foreigners are especially lax in sounding initial "h" before "u" in such words as *hue*, *human*, *humidor*.

Initial "r" sound, although a fricative, will be discussed under the "r" family group.

"s" and "z" are sounded by directing breath along a furrowed tongue, with the tip close to the upper teeth ridge.

French formation is different in that the tongue tip is directed to the lower teeth, the blade touching the upper teeth. Try this formation and note that in the words *thing* and *that* the sound resulting is an approximation between "th" and "s,"—*sing*—and "z"—*zat*.

The Swedish "s" varies again in that it is produced with a stronger hiss, due to the tongue being drawn up and back.

"sh" and "zh" are sounded with the tongue blade raised toward the hard palate, the tip close to the teeth ridge and the lips protruded and rounded.

Many dialect variations are caused by differences in voicing or unvoicing these sounds. The Scandinavians, for example, tend to unvoice "zh"; thus, *pleshur* (pleasure).

*Laterals.* "l" sounds are formed by emitting air at the sides of the tongue. There are numerous variations of "l" formations. Variations are caused by placement of the tongue tip in relation to the upper teeth, teeth ridge, or hard palate. However, the principal differences are caused by the back or middle of the tongue. Tone colors of these "l" variations make them of almost equal importance with "r" sounds.

Standard speech uses a "clear l" and a "dark l": *clear l*—used before a vowel as in *lone, lie, belong*; *dark l*—used after the vowel, as word ending, or before another consonant as in *all, castle, people*.

"The clear l has the resonance of front vowels, the dark l has the resonance of back vowels," says Daniel Jones.\* He makes this concept more clear by suggesting the clear l with short "i" following it, thus, "li," and the dark l followed by a short "u" sound, thus "lu."

Foreign dialect speech most often substitutes the clear sound for the dark one.

"Very high tone color due to raising the back of the tongue is heard in the 'light l' of the Slavic language," says Leonard Bloomfield,\*\* "less high is that of the German or French, while that of English is especially dull, owing to the lowering of the middle of the tongue."

*Retroflex Tongue Action* (also called inversion). This action is often used with "l" and "r" sounds. Turn the tongue back so that the under surface touches the hard palate.

*Doubled Consonants*. These are occasioned wherever two consonants of different values follow each other and when both are sounded. Our doubled consonants often present problems to the foreigner. For example, some tend to syllablize such words as *bottle* and make them sound like *bot-ul*. Again, the "d" will be left out of *ledge* and it will be pronounced as though it were *lech* or *lezh*.

*The "r" Family*. A particularly important group of sounds in the reproduction of dialect.

*Voiced Initial "r"*—Form it with the tip of the tongue close to the teeth ridge. This is the "r" of *rose-red*, etc. Attack should be maintained throughout.

*Partially Voiced "r"*—Its initial formation is the same as the "r" previously described, but do not complete the articulative action. Compare the partially voiced "r" of *front-pray* with the initial "r" in *rose-red*.

*Unvoiced "r"*—In words of the *bird-fur-world* group the "r" is considerably weakened in standard speech, but it assimilates with the vowels and brings them into middle vowel formation. "No 'r'

\* D. Jones, *Outline of English Phonetics*, Chapter IX. N. Y., 1922.

\*\* L. Bloomfield, *Language*, Chapter II. N. Y., 1933.

sound is ever heard finally or before a consonant in non-dialectal British English," says Daniel Jones,\* "but when a word ending with 'r' is followed by a word beginning with a vowel, the 'r' sound is inserted: compare 'you(r)e books,' 'our own.' The practice of changing 'r' to 'ah' is dialectal." Thus *rear-war-star*: *reak-wah-stah*.

*Trilled or Rolled "r"*—Sound this with the flexible tip of the tongue vibrating against the teeth ridge several times in quick staccato effect. Production of this "r" requires plenty of breath and freedom of tongue. It is the "r" employed by telephone operators; thus *three* is pronounced *th-r-r-ree*. It is used extensively by foreigners in place of the English voiced or partially voiced "r."

*Flapped "r"*—This sound, too, is formed with the tip of the tongue vibrating against the teeth ridge. However, it touches it but once. This produces a flapped sound quite similar to "d"; thus *very-sorry* sounds like *vedi-sodi*. This "r" often occurs between vowel sounds.

*Inverted "r"*—Form this by turning the tip of the tongue backwards and toward the hard palate. It has a harsh peak of prominence and often is used by Americans from the Midwest. It is somewhat similar in quality to voiced initial "r" sound. The difference arises mainly from the position inside the word. Inverted "r" is often heard in *hard-corn-sort-bar-curse*, etc.

*Uvular Rolled "r"*—A distinctly foreign sound. Form it with the back of the tongue and soft palate. Ask someone familiar with French to sound the "r" in *français*.

*Uvular Vibration*—Also foreign. Pronounce it with a gargle, the back of the tongue held close to the uvula and pharynx and accompany the action with a supply of breath which sets the uvula vibrating. The resultant "r" is pharyngeal or guttural. Ask someone familiar with German to pronounce *grosse*.

*Foreign Sounds.* There are certain distinctive sounds which add much to the production of given dialects. To avoid their use is to lose half the individuality and sound color which distinguishes the specific dialects. Remember that in the early stages of dialect mastery a great deal of foreign English sounds alike. Mastery of the sounds in question will help the dialect speaker organize his repertoire.

\* D. Jones, *op. cit.*

*French "eu" and "u."* Protrude and purse the lips and sound the "ea" of *heard* or the "i" of *fir* as a means of recreating the French "eu" sound used in *dieu*. For reproduction of the "u" sound: prepare to say "ee." This is the attack. Now purse the lips slowly as if to whistle. This gives the sound something of a "u" quality. In short, let the "e" sound turn into "u" by pursing the lips (used in *music*).

*French Nasal Vowels.* Note these sounds:  $\tilde{a}$ - $\tilde{a}$ m- $\tilde{e}$ n- $\tilde{e}$ m- $\tilde{i}$ n- $\tilde{i}$ m- $\tilde{o}$ n- $\tilde{o}$ m. Nasalize these vowels, keeping the consonants silent. Produce them with full nasal resonance; that is, with lowered soft palate and with extended nostrils.

*The Umlaut.*  $\ddot{o}$ —Round the lips as if to sound long "ō." Place the tongue in position for "i." Voice the sound.

$\ddot{u}$ —Round the lips for the "ōō" sound. Place the tongue for "i." Voice the sound.

$\ddot{a}$ —Use lip action as if to pronounce "ah." Place the tongue as for "i."

*Glottal Catch or Stop.* This sound is neither voiced nor breathed; it is more like a light cough emitted from the glottis. The sound is produced by closing the glottis and suddenly opening it. It gives color to many dialects.

*Glottal Attack.* This signifies a sharp attack from the glottis. It is applied to many words beginning with vowels.

*Tone Projection.* A term implying voice or speech tones propelled in such way as to secure maximum distance range.

*Phonetic Symbols.\** Vowel sound tables show two sets of markings, the diacritical and the phonetic. The diacritical marks are those used in Webster's New International Dictionary. The phonetic symbols marked I. P. are those used by the International Phonetic Association. The following modifying symbols are used for the purposes indicated:

- (~)—Nasal Sound
- (ʔ)—Glottal Catch
- (:)—Lengthened Sound
- (.)—Medium Length Sound

\* A complete treatment of the International Phonetic (I.P.) symbols will be found in *Phonetic Readings in American Speech* by Bender and Fields. Pitman Publishing Corporation, N. Y., 1939.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FOUR

### EXERCISES FOR DIALECT MASTERY

#### *Diaphragmatic Control of Expiration*

1. Take a deep breath.
2. Round the lips as though to say *hoo* and expel breath in rhythmic strokes through this mold. (Place the finger tips between the lower ribs to feel stroke action of diaphragm.)
3. Give voice to *hoo-hoo-hoo* while expelling breath. (Place hands across back to feel action of intercostals.)
4. Using the breathed sound *ha*—pant like a dog—using only the diaphragm and intercostals (not the chest). Vocalize *ha-ha-ha*.

#### *Intercostal Support*

1. Sip breath in rhythmic inhalations 1—2-3; 1—2-3—until lungs are filled.
2. Keep chest cage expanded and lifted. Expel the breath in rhythmic puffs: Thus, *puff*—hold; *puff*—hold; etc. (Be aware of the support of the lower chest, intercostal muscles in sustaining breath.)
3. Let muscles of chest cage collapse completely. Then repeat sipping, etc.

#### *Sensing Relaxation and Tension of Throat*

Take an easy breath through the mouth and keep the throat wide open. Turn this breath into a slow yawn. Study the sensations during this slow-motion effect. Pay particular attention to the initial action—to the relaxed pharynx—to the following through from extreme relaxation to extreme tension. These sensation memories may be applied for different vocal effects.

#### *Guttural Sounds*

1. Breathe the “*h*” of hot. The standard sound is produced by friction (not voice) in the larynx. Try the sound effect produced by varying states of tension in the throat.
2. Effect a throaty, hoarse “*h*” from the root of the tongue.

Focus the sound so as to produce a friction in the throat. Keeping the image of this deep, guttural sound say *ach!* German and Russian speech use these tones. The Scots, Greek and Scandinavian "ch" is lighter in sound. Try a light throaty "ch" in *licht, nicht*.

3. Now focus the breath on the uvula in the mouth. Open the mouth wide for the "h" attack and say *how-have-home-who*. This suggests the Greek "h" attack.

### *Soft Palate Action*

Take a mirror and watch the characteristic action of the soft palate and uvula while breathing.

1. Take a breath through the mouth and expel through the nose. In the intake, the uvula and soft palate lift. In exhalation, they are lowered. Suddenly sound "ah" and watch these agents lift. (For best English speech the soft palate should be lifted well for all oral sounds.)
2. Sound "ng" with mouth open. Watch the agents lower. This palate lowering opens the nasal passage and closes the oral passage.
3. To produce a "nasal twang": Affect a very lazy lowered soft palate. Speak this sentence with nasal breath focus and nostrils contracted: "Mrs. Jones certainly is gettin' high-falutin' these days."
4. To shut off the nasal chambers: Affect a cold in the head. Use normal articulation in speaking this sentence, but feel it impossible to breathe thru the nasal passages: "Oh, I god sudge a code id by dose!" (Oh, I've got such a cold in my nose.)
5. To secure full nasal resonance: Open the nasal passages wide and distend the nostrils. Say, *sing-sang-sung*, and observe the lowered soft palate as the "ng" sound is sustained. Retain this "ng" palate position and sound the nasalized vowels *sã-sõ-sũ*. (These sounds are important for the French dialect.)
6. To focus breath against the soft palate: Visualize the soft palate as lowered. Direct breath to it in this position and speak in a high-pitched monotone of a minor key: "Madame Szhong Ky Shek." (Madame Chang Kai Chek.) (This suggestion is helpful for Chinese pitch tone and timbre.)

*Chest Expansion and Resonance*

1. Place the finger tips on the upper chest. Lift and lower the chest by means of muscular action unaccompanied by breathing effort. Keep the shoulders relaxed. While lifting, sense a feeling of elasticity "up the front" of the chest, and a relaxation extending over the shoulders and "down the back." (Suggest the effect of an escalator running up the front and down the back—to lift the upper chest and relax down the back.)
2. Expand the whole chest with a feeling suggestive of confident control. Sense a broadening and lengthening simultaneously while breathing deeply. Sense deep breath support and speak impressively: "I am of the Russian Imperial Order."

*Tongue Flexibility*

Exercises for tip of tongue:

1. Place tip against teeth ridge. Say *la-la-la* slowly. Increase pace.
2. Press tip against teeth ridge and release breath with "t" stroke. Place tip against teeth for the "t" in "it is." Place the tip against cutting edge of teeth for the same utterance. (Consciousness of the difference in these formations in connected speech will simplify many dialect effects.)
3. Sound *t-da, t-da, t-da* slowly. Increase pace. Change the sound to *tra, tra, tra*; then trill the "r"; *trra, trra, trra*. (If the trill is difficult this slow approach to it will be most helpful.)
4. Develop tongue tapping and rolling with *r-ra-ta-ta-tat, r-ra-ta-ta-tat*, etc. Start slowly and increase pace.

Exercise for front of tongue:

Turn the front of the tongue back toward the soft palate, touch the hard palate with the under surface of the tongue. This is *retroflex action* often called for in dialect speech. Open the mouth wide enough to allow free and flexible movement.

Repeat retroflexly: *lah-lay-lee-lie-lo-loo*.

Use this very liquid "l" for: *love-laugh-hello-pillow-fell-tell-globe*.

Exercise for back of tongue:

1. Develop awareness of the action of the back of the tongue while uttering the "k" of *kahk-kake-keck-kike-koke-kook*.
2. Develop awareness of uvular vibration by suggesting a gargle of the uvula; then sound the gargle as "r." Use this effect for "*F*rance-real-roam-rat-crawl-grand."

### *Jaw Exercises*

1. Let the jaw hang expressive of stupidity. Sense the relaxation. With strong free strokes of the jaw utter: *aw-paw-thaw-chaw-ball-call-hall-Saul*.
2. Open the jaw as wide as possible. Lock it in place wide open and try to speak distinctly on any subject using only tongue movement instead of jaw movement like a ventriloquist.
3. Use a deep jaw stroke opening the mouth wide while uttering *care-fare-mare-stare-bear-dare; hot-stop-rot-chop-drop-nod-hod-rod*.

### *Lip Action*

1. Pronounce with over-done lip action: *ē—ō—ā—ō*, sounding each vowel distinctly. Start slowly and then increase pace. Link the sounds, thus: "*eoao—eoao*" prolonging "ā" and using strong lip action.
2. Utter *ēdēē* with tense slit lips, then *ēdō* with well rounded lips. Practice with increasing pace: *ēdee-ēdō—ēdee-ēdō*.

### *Vowel Formations*

Proceed from "front" through "back" vowels: *ē-ī-ā-ă-ā-ḡ-ō-ōō*. Start on an easy high pitch and slide down the scale through procedure. Develop awareness of tongue placement.

### *A Basic Exercise for Attack, Flexibility, Breath Control, and Pitch Awareness*

This exercise combines six vowel sounds with the lip, tip of tongue, and back of tongue consonants. Get into the vowel (color sound) through the consonant (stroke) with the three variations of attack suggested. Keep chest lifted, shoulders relaxed, and be aware of diaphragm and intercostal control. Watch self in mirror to assure economy of movement, allowing no movement of head, shoulders or chest.

1. Lip articulation: *mah-may-mee-my-mo-moo*  
                             (breath) *pah-pay-pec-py-po-poo*  
                             (sub-vocal) *bah-bay-bee-by-bo-boo*
2. Tip of tongue: *tah-tay-tee-ty-to-too*  
                             *dah-day-dee-dy-do-doo*
3. Back of tongue: *kah-kay-kee-ky-ko-koo*  
                             *gah-gay-gee-gy-go-goo*

Three attacks: Repeat sounds (1) as a command, (2) with staccato tossed effect, (3) with intervals of pitch and siren effect (start on high note, *mah*, drop the pitch of each succeeding sound, and after attacking the last, *moo*, lift the pitch very gradually as a siren without any pitch jumps).

Translate these exercises into word attack.

1. (command): demand-run-insist-dash-control-refuse-obey-command.
2. (staccato): skip-hop-trot-toss-fun-happy-frolic.
3. (siren, innuendo): use slide on italicized sounds.  
                             "Oho, I see!" "Is that so."

Additional enunciation and vocal drills may be found in *Speech Correction Manual* by Bender and Kleinfeld, Farrar & Rinehart, Inc.

## CHAPTER TWENTY-FIVE

### AMERICAN FOLK SPEECH

Negro. Mountain, Southern White, New England, Pennsylvania Dutch.

#### NEGRO

THE GREATEST difficulty in generalizing about Negro speech is that there are three widely varying types. There is the *Harlem*, spoken by hundreds of thousands who have come in contact with that section of New York City and who have spread to other cities of the North.

There is the *Gullah*, a dialect heard in and through sections of the Carolinas.

There is the genuine "*darky*" dialect, the dialect of "Uncle Remus"—variations of which are heard throughout the South.

Harlem speech closely approaches that of average American. It differs from average American in rhythm (sometimes it is drawled), stress (sometimes it contains livelier stresses), intonation (it often is lower in pitch or noticeably higher in pitch), timbre (usually it is richer, more resonant and more musical).

Gullah is almost a language of its own. Elizabeth Grimball says that when the musical show *Porgy* was written it was so thick with Gullah it had to be translated into a more understandable dialect before presentation to its New York audience. Gullah is hardly of value for stage purposes.\*

There is also the speech of the Creole Negro of Louisiana, a speech greatly affected by the French during their long occupation of New Orleans.\*\* Rarely, as yet, has this dialect been heard on the stage.

Relative to the dialect of the Southern Negro, its tempo is extreme; sometimes it is jerky and explosive, at other times it is slow and soothing. The pitch, too, is capable of wide variation, though

\* The most able account of Gullah is Professor Reed Smith's: *Gullah Dialect*, Bureau of Publications, University of South Carolina.

\*\* C. M. Wise, *Creole Negro*, Quarterly Journal of Speech, 1933.

many Negroes speak with monotonic utterance and great rapidity. Conversely, some may lift their tones almost an octave and let their speech slowly fall and rise in virtual thirds.

Phrases by no means conform to sense groupings. "*Have Marse White's dawg got home?*" The first three words may be held on a high pitch. Many a phrase shows no stressed syllable whatever.

### *Syntax*

It is violated with a consistency that gives rise to substitute forms. A most interesting example is the replacement of the relative pronoun *who* with *which*, *what*, *that*. Thus, *Ah dunno w'ich ah want. De man w'ut wuz hung las' week?*

Double comparisons are frequently used: *Dat's de mos' bes'es' chick'n ah evah et.*

*Is* and *was* are used as forms of the verb *to be*. Thus, "*I is pretty mad. Is you goin'? You was to bring milk back.*"

The Negro, being imitative, likes to use polysyllabic words. He misuses them most colorfully.

### *Pronunciation, Assimilation*

ā—is pronounced with a long "ē" vanish or as "ě." Thus: *aeen't* (ain't) *tek* (take).

ǣ—is often sounded like "ā": *cain't* (can't) *haiv* (have).

ě—is often sounded like "ā" with an "i" vanish: *haid* (head) *rais'* (rest) *braid* (bread) *aiggs* (eggs).

ī—is a drawled "ä": *ace* (ice) *fla* (fly).

ĩ—is drawled and often diphthongized as "iũ": *biull* (bill) *giuve* (give).

th—when voiced is sounded as "d": *togedder* (together) *den* (then) *wedder* (weather).

l—is assimilated with "f" and "p": *he'p* (help) *se'f* (self).

r—is not sounded when preceded by "th": *th'oo* (through) *th'ow* (throw). Nor is it sounded at word endings: *heah* (here) *dea* (dear). It is sounded as initial "r" at the beginning of words or after an initial vowel: *aroun'*, *rose*. It is not used after vowels in middle of words: *inte'cep'* (intercept).

s—sometimes is voiced: *liz'n* (listen) *yez ma'am* (yes ma'am).

v—is sounded as "b": *ebnin'* (evening) *heb'n* (heaven).

## MOUNTAIN DIALECT

While it is true that dialect in the foothills varies from that in the higher reaches of the mountains, as in the Ozarks, it is even truer that all mountain folk in the United States tend to speak in much the same dialect—particularly because most of our mountain dialect is based on retention of forms that have passed out of use in more active portions of the United States. For this reason much of the following is applicable in either the Ozark Mountains district of Missouri, Arkansas and Oklahoma or in Carolina.

â—is often given a long “ē” sound: *care, scare, share* become *keer, skeer, sheer*.

â, ä—in such words as *dare, stare, bear, jare, hair, pare, rare, tear, wear* change to *där, stär, bär, jar, här, pär, rär, tär, wär*.

ä—becomes “ä” in *calm, balmy, psalm*: *cām, bāmy, sām*.

ä—changes to “ä” in *sparrow, narrow, barrel, arrow* and these words are shortened. Also there is a final unstressed “a” sound in many instances: *spärra, nürra, bür, ärr*.

a—when final and unstressed takes a “y” sound as in *lady*, thus: *soda, idea, malaria, aljalja, Ida; sody, idy, malairy, aljalfy, Idy*.

any, many, can:	<i>iny, miny, cain or kin</i>
what, rather, far:	<i>whut, ruther, fur</i>
are, arm, army:	<i>air, airm, airmy</i>
tramp, stamp, camp:	<i>tromp, stomp, comp</i>
have, catch, gather:	<i>hev, ketch, gether</i>
hasn't, haven't:	<i>hain't</i>

ě—becomes “ä” in *egg, leg, instead, head*—thus, *aig, laig, instaid, haid*.

ě—changes to “i” in this group: *men, kettle, get, hen, lend, fell; min, kittle, git, hin, lin', fill*.

ī—becomes a doubled “ä” sound when followed by “r”: *fire, hire, liar, wire, spire, iron; fää, lää, wää, spää, ään*.

ī—is changed to “ē” in *little, sit, itch, twig, idiot, stitch, rich, litter, limb, leetle, seet, etch, tweeg, eediot, steetch, reech, leeter, leem*.

ō—changes to “u” in these words: *clothes, rose, grows* (due to Old English influence): *cluz, ruz, gruz*.

ō, ow—these assimilate to “er” as follows. When “o” is final. *Potato, tomato: potater, tomater*. When “ow” is heard in two-

syllabled words such as *fellow*, *hollow*, *swallow*, *widow*, *window*, *bellow*; thus, *feller*, *holler*, *swaller*, *widder*, *winder*, *beller*.

ŭ—is often changed to short “e” thus: *judge*, *such*, *touch*, *scuttle*; *jedge*, *sech*, *tech*, *scettle*.

û—this has various sounds, thus: *heert* (hurt) *heerd* (heard) *airth* (earth) *bairth* (birth) *warld* (world) *clark* (clerk) *barch* (birch) *sartain* (certain) *cartin* (curtain) *bard* (bird) *larn* (learn) *ward* (word) *wark* (work).

Here is a brief list of general vowel changes:

*sauce*, *haunt*, *gaunt*, *aunt*, *jaundice*—*sās*, *hānt*, *gānt*, *ānt*, *jānders*.

*queer*—*quār*; *spoil*, *boil*, *soil*—*spile*, *bile*, *sile*.

Consonants “t” and “r” are often introduced or omitted thus:

t—added to words: *suddent*, *wisht*, *oncet*, *chanct*, *chosent*.

t—instead of “d”: *middle*, *killed*, *scared*, *joined*, *spoiled*, *leaned* become *mittle*, *kilt*, *skeert*, *jint*, *spilt*, *leant*.

t—omitted as in *slep’*, *crep’*, *nex’* (monosyllables with “t” preceded by consonant).

r—introduced in such words as: *gorn*(gone), *gort*(got), *northin’* (nothing).

r—shifted in: *interduce*, *hunderd*, *children*, *prespiration*, *preform*, *aferd*, *brethern*, *perscription*, *perceed*, *p’raps*, *persume*.

Variations: *suh* (sir), *reah* (rear), *sperit* (spirit), *atter* (after), *seed* (seen), *ast* (asked), *ter* (to), *sleep’n’* (sleeping), *onwell* (unwell), *ontie* (untie), *onymal* (animal), *pardner* (partner), *futher* (further), *uster* (used to), *elum* (elm), *filum* (film).

The timbre of this speech tends toward the nasal. The character of these people shows attributes of courage, pride, vitality, and rock-ribbed American honesty. The positive “twang” and distinctive “twist” of their speech reflects the character. The tempo is often very slow and drawled. The rhythm is always revelatory of the thought processes.

#### NEW ENGLAND

New England has an exceedingly colorful group of dialects. A number of writers have recorded idioms of this section, among them James Russell Lowell, Rose T. Cooke and Mary E. W. Freeman. Poems and stories by these writers reveal a wealth of phrases and hints. Dr. Hans Kurath of Brown University has recently completed

a project mapping out the areas of dialect change in the New England states, his dialect findings for this vicinity being scholarly and exhaustive.

First observe the negative cast of sentence structure: *Hiram, yeou ain't agoin' tu milk thet ceow neow be ye? Sairy, ye dun't jigger twill rain? Not'j ut stays this way.*

Although this dialect includes the constructions: *I be, you be, we be*, one never hears *he be*. Sometimes *is* is used for plurals: *Him an' me's calc'latin' t' wed.*

ā—has a strong “e” vanish; *āēel* (ail) *lāēek* (lake).

ą—becomes “a” as in *wash*. For sound spelling it is more convenient to use the symbol “o” thus; *all, caught, law, brought, sought* become *oll, cot, lah, brot, sot*.

ō—takes a “u” vanish, but do not sound it like the “ou” of sound. Keep it a distinct long “o.” *Cold, boat, roll, so, rope* become *cō-ūld, bō-ūt, rō-ūll, sō-ū, rō-ūp*.

ou-ow—these are triphthongized by taking on an initial short “e” sound. Thus, *sound, found, through, south, you, wound, town, now, cow, county* become *šound, fěound, thrěough, sěouth, yěou, wěoun', teown, heow, ceow, keounty*.

ū—This sound, under conditions, loses its initial “y” sound: *creature, sequel, feature, equal, revenue* become *creetūr, feetūr, ēkal, sēkle, revenōō*.

However, *unite, usual, beauty, view* and *cue* retain the initial “y” sound. Slur or blur it slightly, in order not to make it prominent.

ow—when ending a polysyllabic word, is changed to final “r.” Thus *tomorrow, barrow, narrow, borrow, arrow, widow, sorrow* become *tommorrer, berrer, narrer, borrrer, widder, sorrer*.

y—is substituted for final unstressed “a.” *China, zebra, idea, Hulda, Ida, soda* become *Chiny, zebry, idy, Huldry, Idy, sodry*.

oi—is never sounded; instead substitute “i” sound: *point, soil, appoint, loiter, voice, join, loin, groin, coil, royal*, become *p'int, s'ile, app'int, v'iter, v'ice, j'ine, l'ine, gr'ine, c'ile, r'yal*.

r—when followed by another consonant is often elided: *hurt, dirt, shirt, worse, ignorant, iron, north, course*, become *hu't, du't, shu't, wu's, ign'ant, a'n, no'th, co'se*.

In this series note how “r” changes the preceding vowel sound: *are, earth, arm, barn, harm* become *air, airth, airm, bairn, hairm*.

Of the words in the following series, although they have been handed on by New Englanders who know the speech well, one would

need to travel a long way to find individuals who use more than a quarter. This is no reflection upon the authenticity of the list. The truth is that New England, like the rest of the country, has been forced to shake loose from provincialisms. Even peculiarities of pronunciation are rapidly leveling out. It is debatable, for example, how many people in the Northeast still employ "r" after the modulated "ä," as in *aunt*. For stage purposes, nevertheless, the word list is an excellent one and only a scholar will detect that the vocabulary is conglomerated rather than specifically sectional.

haint	am not, are not
wunt or worn't	will not
t'want	it was not
doos	does
dunno	don't know
coz	because
ea or eu	yes
on't	on to (I'm on't it)
doo	do
wuz	was
hev	have
hez	has
hed	had
gut	got
sot	sat
agin	again
heerd	heard
f'erce	fierce
dror	draw
marcy	mercy
sarpint	serpent
ketch	catch
sech	such
hull	whole
fur	for
gret	great
barth	bath
arnt	aunt
arsk	ask
resh	rush
crep'	creep
et	ate
het	heat
kep	keep
set	sit
ef	if
druv	drove
clum	climb-ed
brung	brought
further	further
nuther	neither

arter	after
leetle	little
pooty-iest	pretty-iest
dreffle	dreadful
keer	care
on'y	only
wal	well
'ith	with
frind	friend
ginerous	generous
garpe	gape
punkin	pumpkin
kelender	calendar
axcept	except
kerrect	correct
knowed	know
drawed	draw
drinked	drink-drank
growed	grow-grew
hist	hoist
sass	impertinence
spunk	courage
skunk	a mean person
coot	nondescript person
critter	any animal
admire to go	glad to go
I'm a mind to	deciding to
dight	a small portion
boughten	bought
mought (mawt)	might

## SOUTHERN WHITE DIALECT

Phoneticians have long been aware that the only American speech properly to be called "dialect" is that of the Gullah Negro and that of the Pennsylvania Dutch. These authorities contend that there is ample evidence that most of the words which sound like dialectal concoctions to our modern ears are very often nothing but old forms. In the New England folk speech just under consideration, for example, a surprising number of the words are Old English forms which have dropped out of current usage. Save for some colloquialisms the speech of the White South is made up of speech conventions which only a few generations ago enjoyed general cultured sanction.

This dialect is variously known as "Southern" or as a "folk speech" or as an "accent." It is the easiest dialect to master. Its syntax needs no attention, since it follows that of English. Its *rhythm* is slow, drawled. *Stress* comes almost entirely from lengthened, inflected vowel sounds. Thus, in the sentence, "Honey, haen' me thaet book," one should stress the italicized vowels.

*Intonation* provides a great deal of color. Gliding inflection greatly contributes to the generally pleasing musical pattern.

*Timbre* is another agreeable feature of Southern speech. The Southerner has great skill in avoiding harsh and bare sounds. It is more accurate to say that he colors such sounds; and his method is to diphthongize and triphthongize—as might be expected in a drawling speech.

ā—The initial sound is lengthened with a downward glide, passing to a short “i” vanish. Thus, *ā-īle* (ale), *mā-īdc* (made), *sā-īd* (said).

ă—Has a short “ě” vanish, often suggesting a slight “y” glide which might be indicated thus: *hă-yed* (had), *mă-yen* (man). Do not make the “y” sound too prominent. Attack the initial sound quite tensely.

ā̄—Is sounded as long “ā” indicated above: *ā-ěsk* (ask), *bā-ěth* (bath), *tā-ěsk* (task).

ā̄—Attack this sound as “ō” and give it a marked “w” vanish: *ō-ll* (all), *lō-aw* (law), *cō-aut* (caught).

ě—Produce this with the effect of two separate short “e” sounds or as “ye” thus: *tě-yell* (tell), *thě-yen* (then), *depě-yend* (depend). (Note that *head-said-meant* are exceptions, produced with a long “ā” attack and a short “i” vanish thus: *ha-id*, *sa-id*, *ma-int*.)

ī—This is uttered with a drawled, sustained “ah” sound thus: *ahce* (ice), *flah* (fly).

ī̄—Is produced with a short “u” vanish, often “yu.” Thus: *ī-yut* (it), *skī-yun* (skin), *wī-um’n* (women), *quī-yuz* (quiz), *mī-unit* (minute). Do not hold this short “u” sound.

ō̄—This sound is standard in most instances for words *sorry*, *solid*; exceptions are “ō” sounds such as *ōff*, *gōne*, *ōn*, *wōsh* (wash), *cōugh*.

ou—This diphthong has a characteristic sound in all parts of the South. Utter an initial drawled “ă” and an “ō” vanish. Thus, *ă-ōūt* (out), *ă-ōoch* (ouch).

The consonants of “Southern” are standard, save in the case of “r” sound. Initial “r” is often given the merest suggestion of an introductory vowel sound, in such words as *right*, *really*, *room*, *rid*.

An “r” occurring in the middle of a word is never sounded, but it always affects the preceding vowel sound, thus: *awdeh* (order), *awwen* (warden), *sawt* (sort).

Final "r" is never sounded. Note how the sound trails off: *awa* (our), *ba* (bar), *suh* (sir).

## PENNSYLVANIA DUTCH

Pennsylvania Dutch is the speech of a colony of Pennsylvanians of South German origin who kept to themselves for two hundred years. Formerly this dialect had only a few pure English words, but it is rapidly being Anglicized. H. L. Mencken estimates that between 60 and 65% of the colony can speak the German dialect and that one third use it constantly.\*

This speech is usually "inhibited" rather than emotional in quality, even among themselves. This may be due to a preference for the German dialect and thus an annoyance over having to speak English, or it may come from a feeling of inferiority and suspicion of snobbishness when among English-speaking people. The result is that this speech has a number of short, monosyllabic stresses.

*Timbre* is generally heavy and guttural or throaty, although their South German origin and careless speech habits give their speech a certain softness and less hard or harsh sounds than either German or English. Aspirate tones and softened sibilants are very common and characteristic. One should constantly bear in mind the affinity of the dialect with German.

*Pronunciation* is characterized by sounds focused farther back in the mouth and by lip-laziness. Diphthongization of vowels is common and creates limp attack. Final articulations are generally weak. Consonants are never voiced as strongly as in English. This causes confusion when the articulated sound represents: "t-d, p-b, s-z, v-w." The last two sounds are commonly interchanged. Most vowels tend toward diphthongization, thus:

ā—	sound it with strong "ē" vanish:	āēel	(ale), etc.
ě—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	ěünd	(end), etc.
ī—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	ievvy	(ivy), etc.
ī—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	"if followed by "r":	iuron (iron)
ō—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	ōōld	(old), etc.
ō—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	ōün	(on), etc.
ě—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	cěüll	(cell), etc.
ă—	" " " " " " " " " " " "	ăënd	(and), etc.
ă—	is substituted for the "ä" of <i>aunt</i> , <i>ask</i> , etc.		

\* H. L. Mencken, *The American Language*, New York, 1936.

au—is used for “ou” thus. out, town, ouch become *aut*, *taun*, *autch*.

ōō—is substituted in: “avenue, tune, news,” etc. become *avenoo*, *toon*, *noos*, etc.

v—when not an initial sound it tends toward “f”: *efening* (evening) *afenoo* (avenue).

g—when not an initial sound becomes “k”: *ukly* (ugly) *bak* (bag).

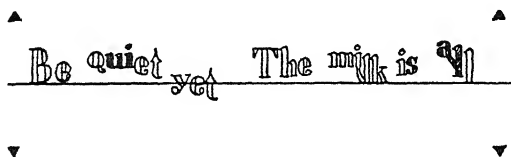
j-jg—are softened to “tsch”: *tschutsch* (judge) *tschump* (jump) *tschoke* (joke).

sk—when initial are sounded as “shk”: *shkool* (school) *shkin* (skin).

r—make it guttural, but never trill it.

th—is always sounded as “t” when unvoiced and as “d” when voiced: *t'ing* (thing) *t'in* (thin) *d'at* (that) *d'em* (them).

In Penn-Dutch the voice invariably drops in pitch toward sentence endings. Particularly characteristic is the drop at question endings. There is a great deal of inflectional glide in this speech, rather than definite levels of pitch change. Tempo is moderately slow. Note the general intonational pattern as shown in:



Syntax is distinctive. “Yet” is commonly added with a negative implication, “already” with a positive; but they are never used together. “Ain’t” is often used to intensify questions. Also, “that” is used in place of “so that.” The following sentences suggest some of these peculiarities.

Are you ready already?—Are you ready yet?—You’ll be there, ain’t?—I like coffee steaming hot that it burns the inside—It doesn’t look to stay away from the funeral—Leave me go anyways—It needs mended—Make the door shut.

### *General Practice Material*

#### 1. *Negro*

Plays: *The No ’Count Boy* (one act)—Paul Green

*Green Pastures*—Marc Connelly

*The Nigger*—Edward Sheldon

*Uncle Tom's Cabin*—Harriet Beecher Stowe

Monodramas: "Passing Fair"—Clay Franklin (*You're the Show*)

"Dark Brother"—Clay Franklin (*These Mortals among Us*)

Story monologues in Parker's *New Monologues*

Stories and Poems: *Uncle Remus*—Joel Chandler Harris

Poems of Paul Lawrence Dunbar

## 2. *Mountain*

Plays: *Hell Bent for Heaven*—Hatcher Hughes

*Carolina Folk Plays*—F. H. Koch

*Pink and Patches* (one act)—Margaret Bland

Folk Songs (Story Background): *A Song Catcher in Southern Mountains* — Dorothy Scarborough

Monodrama: "Mountain Interlude"—Clay Franklin (*These Mortals among Us*)

## 3. *New England*

Plays: *Icebound*—Owen Davis

*Ethan Frome*—a dramatization of Edith Wharton's novel by Owen and Donald Davis, suggested by a dramatization by Lowell Barrington

Monodrama (Vermont): *Mis' Stone*—Frances M. Hoyt

## 4. *Southern White*

Plays: *To the Ladies*—Kaufman and Connelly

*Up Pops the Devil*—Hackett and Goodrich

*Miss Nelly of N'Orleans*—Lawrence Eyre

(Kentucky) *Boys Will be Boys*—Charles O'Brien Kennedy

(Oklahoma) *Roadside*—Lynn Riggs

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SIX

### IRISH-ENGLISH DIALECT

THE IRISH have consistently demonstrated an aptitude in politics and in business. One may meet Irish who are reserved and most practically hard-headed. There are other Irish so emotional that they create violent and angry storms with little apparent provocation—only to subside with amazing change of mood within a little while.

It is a rare Irishman who has no capacity for keeping abreast of his troubles. This ability to maintain detachment toward misfortune perhaps accounts for the national tendency to respond to life with a sense of humor. One can find people in Ireland who are so gentle in courtesy as almost to be reverential. Still another feature of the Irishman is his ability, on occasion, to become a most sentimentally melancholic individual. Finally, there is that rich Celtic imagination which invests the land with superstitions of fairies and “wee folk.”

#### *Rhythm*

The general tempo of Irish speech is fast. Smoothness of sentence flow makes tempo seem even faster than it really is. There rarely is any hesitancy, and the practice of diphthongization and triphthongization gives added swing to the speech. This swing suggests no sharp or precisely measured beats. It gives rise to the famed “Irish lilt.”

#### *Stress*

The syllabic stress is very generally placed toward the end of words. Compare the following accents with American accent: *hereditary*, *excellent*, *committee*, *mischievous*.

An emotional emphasis must be kept to the fore, as Irish vitality is squarely behind their phrasing. The attack of a sentence usually is emphatic and then, as the thought proceeds, there is a slackening of volume and pitch emphasis.

#### *Intonation*

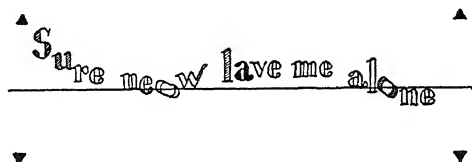
As might be expected from emotionally stressed speech there is a variety of intonation. The dominant pitch is generally higher

than American, but is rarely obvious, due to extreme fluctuation. The range is extreme, the pitch fluctuates from high to low and low to high. The voice may progress on a level intonation for a short while and then suddenly curve up and down. This wide range is used by men and women, but is more noticeable with women. In the following sentences this sign (/) marks the end of level intonation and the beginning of marked rise and fall.

Man: "I may be broke today, but / tomorrow, faith, I'll have the wealth of India in me pocket."

Woman: "Sit down, Mrs. Casey. / Won't you be havin' some sauerkraut juice on me now."

The characteristic Irish remark, "*Sure now, leave me alone,*" offers a good intonational key.



### Timbre

A particular feature of this speech is the Irish habit of fluctuating breath focus from the back to the front of the mouth. *Would you now?* is rendered with the diphthong of *would* enunciated in the front of the mouth and with *now* fluctuating to the back.

Diphthongization and triphthongization of Irish vowels have a great effect upon timbre. The speech is further broadened by marked Irish aspiration of consonant sounds—as, for example, the extra breath introduced in the articulation of *true*, *what*, *smile*, which become something close to *thru*e, *hw*hat, *shm*ile.

These speech habits enrich the tone, so that Irish speech ranks as unusually melodious.

### Syntax

Irish past tense clings to the Old English form of vowel substitution as a means of showing time changes. Thus, *sleep-slep'*; *creep-crep'*; *rose-ruz*; *catch-cotch*; *gather-guther*; *sat-sot*, etc.

Past tense is also formed by the use of *after* thus: "*I was after finishing me work,*" is synonymous with, "*I have finished my work.*" Never use *after* to suggest present or future action, for the Irish never use it thus.

Note these archaisms. "There *does be* some excitement" (substituting *does be* for *is*). "I *do be* at Church every Sunday" (for "I *am* at Church"). "Your mother has three children?" "Yes, she *have*" (*have* for *has*). Again, for special emphasis we find the rural Irish saying: "I like *the* Latin"—"I perish with *the* cold."

Note these intensifications. *A cruel, biting wind; dead sure; powerful cold; mortal wet.* These alone would stamp the Irish as dramatic.

In this dialect the ambiguity of "you" for singular and plural is avoided. "You" is retained only for the singular, and the plural is formed by *ye*, *yiz* and *youse*.

Diminutives sometimes receive an "o" or "een" sound, thus: *lad-o*, *boy-o*, *ma'ourneen*, *man-een*, *sword-een*.

### Pronunciation

"The speech of the cultured of Dublin, by general consent, is considered the best in the world," says Professor Trueblood of Michigan University.\* In so saying, the professor has no reference to dialect as discussed here. Nevertheless, the dialect is perhaps the noblest of any we might consider. In many respects it is the richest. The Irish have retained many Old English pronunciations, have extracted many Gaelic pronunciations and have acquired much from the heavy infiltrations of Scots that once took place.\*\*

"Gaelic is responsible in great measure," says Joyce, "for Irish triphthongization."† While Gaelic has only five vowels it has thirteen diphthongs and five triphthongs, most of which affect Irish speech—for they make lavish use of two and three sounds in one vowel. *Cold* illustrates this. Its vowel is the diphthong "ō-ō" in English. To this sound the Irish add an "u" sound, thus creating a triphthongal value *cō-ōō-ūld*.

Here are the major speech shifts that make this dialect so colorful.

ea ††—This is sounded as "ā" thus: *tay* (tea) *aisy* (easy) *sate* (seat) *mate* (meat) *taze* (tease)

\* *Quarterly Journal of Speech*, November 1933.

\*\* Mary Hayden, Marcus Hartog, "Irish Dialect of English," *Fortnightly Review*, April 1909.

† P. W. Joyce, *English As We Speak It in Ireland*.

†† The popular assumption that the Irish do not use the long "e" sound in "ie" and "ee" words is incorrect. The Irishman usually says *priest* (not *praste*) *believe* (not *belave*) *indeed* (not *indade*).

- ei-e—Retains the “â” sound (O.E.) in such words as *consave* (conceive) *sphare* (sphere) *severe* (severe) *saze* (seize)
- e—Is changed to short “ĭ” when it occurs before “m” and “n” thus: *tin* (ten) *thin* (then) *stim* (stem). Uneducated Irish sometimes use “ĭ” before other consonants too; viz., *iligant* (elegant) *agin* (again) *litter* (letter) *jilly* (jelly)
- er—Retains the O.E. sound “ä” as in sergeant. The Irish still give this class of words its old pronunciation: *sar-tain* (certain) *marchant* (merchant) *parhaps* (perhaps)
- oi-i—These sounds are often interchanged. Tipperary is the home of this idiomatic locution: *foine* (fine) *bile* (boil) *bye* (boy) *sile* (soil). The “oi” sound should not receive the bald modern pronunciation; instead, attack the initial sound without lip rounding.
- û—In standard English this middle vowel is sounded the same in all words of the *bird-hurt-world-her* group. But the Irish make distinctions, thus:
- ō—In “or” words such as *world-word-work* the vowel sound used is “u” thus; *wurld-wurd-wurk*. (Always trill the r.)
- ẽ-ĩ—In “ir” and “er” words such as *bird-her-sir-jerk* use the “u” (ōō) sound. In sound-spelling they become *burrd-surr-hurr*, etc.

### Assimilation

The final consonant of a word often affects its preceding vowel, either diphthongizing or triphthongizing it thus: *shōō-ōōr* (sure) *ou-ōōt* (out).

Some consonant sounds do not coalesce when brought together thus: *char-um* (charm) *fir-um* (firm) *wor-um* (worm) *her-up* (herb) *Char-les* (Charles)

The “s” is usually aspirated before consonants. To render this aspirated “s” create a hissing, breathed quality as it is uttered. Round the lips and say *smile* (s-shmile) *stick* (s-shtick).

Irish speech is often modified by “syncope,” the leaving out of a consonant thus: *gar’ner* (gardener) *or’nary* (ordinary).

### Characteristic Phrases and Sentences.

“Faith, but it was afther rainin’ hard that day fer fair!”

“Sure now, an’ if it’s jist th’ same to you I’d ruther go.”

"It's no credit to be in this place atall."

"Oi niver intinded to spind me loife in the counthry, of that ye may be sartain."

### *Table of Consonant Variations*

- d—Aspirate it before "r" thus: *dhrink* (drink), *dhreary* (dreary), *ordher* (order).
  - Final "d" is often omitted after "l" and "n" thus: *pon* (pond), *an'* (and), *win'* (wind).
  - Before long "u" it generally is converted into "j" thus: *projuce* (produce), *juring* (during), *rejuce* (reduce), *juke* (duke).
  
- l-n—These sounds are extremely liquid. Place the front of the tongue against the upper front teeth while uttering *ball-kill-can-fan-need*.
  
- r—Use a trilled "r" sound for this dialect.
  - An extra "u" vowel sound divides the consonants when "r" precedes "m" thus: *warum* (warm), *harum* (harm).
  - When "r" is preceded by "a" a short "u" sound is introduced thus: *caure* (care), *aiur* (air), *baur* (bear), *theiur* (their), *theure* (there).
  - When "r" is preceded by "o" deepen the vowel until it becomes "a" thus: *arb* (orb), *dar* (door), *par* (pour), *mar* (more).
  - When "r" is preceded by long "e" an extra "u" sound is heard thus: *lee-ur* (leer), *bee-ur* (beer).
  - When "r" is preceded by long "u" the same extra "u" sound is heard: *shu-oor* (sure), *cyoo-ur* (cure).
  - When "r" is preceded by long "i" the same extra "u" sound is heard: *spi-ure* (spire), *hi-ur* (hire).
  
- s—Aspirate it before consonants thus: *shmile* (smile), *shtick* (stick), *shmear* (smear).
  
- t—Aspirate it before "r" thus: *thruth* (truth), *thry* (try).
  
- th—The "t" is virtually double-sounded thus: *t-think*, *t-thought*, *t-thin*, *t-then*.  
 Also the "th" sound of Old English is retained in words like *height*, *right*, *sight*.

w—Give it an initial aspirate quality thus *h-wide, h-with, h-wade, h-win*. (Most sound spelling substitutes “p” for “h” thus: *pwat, why*.)

z—Poorly educated Irish aspirate it thus: *dizhmal, dozhen, drizzhling*.

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	AS IN	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	ale	ei	ail (ale), grait (great), na-um (name)
ā	e	vacate	ei	vai-cait (vacate), kai-otic (chaotic)
ǣ	æ	add	ɑ:	ādd, ānd, hānd, hāve, thāt
ǿ	ə	along	ə	ǿlong, ǿnnoy, the, melody
ā	a	ask	ɑ:	āsk, bāth, tāsk, lāugh, fāncy
ǣ	ɑ:	arm	ɑ:	ārm, fāther, dārling, heart, bother
ǣ	o:	all	o:Δ	ǣll, caught, law, brought, halt
ē	i:	see	i:	see, indeed, tay (tea)
ē	i	evoke	i	evoke, reverse, depind
ě	ε	elk	e	elk, head, said, says, pin (pen)
ī	ai	ice	Δi	oice, floy, koyte (kite)
ī	ɪ	it	ɪ	it, busy, women, hymn, skin
ō	oʊ	so	oʊə	so, propose, know, blow
ō	o	obey	o:	obey, molest, November
ō	o	off	o:	ǣff, dǣg (dog), cǣf (cough)
ō	ɒ	on	ɒə	on, sorry, solid, quality, hostile
ōō	ʊ	good	u	gōōd, put, fōōt, could, wolf
ōō	u:	food	u:ə	food, mood, rude, true, chew
ū	ju	usual	juʊ	cue, unite, view, beauty, few
û	ɜ	hurt	u	hūrrt, sūrr (sir), būrrd (bird)
u	Δ	up	ʊ	ōōp, blōōd, dōōz (does)
ou	αʊ	out	Δαʊ	ū-ōō-ōōt (out), tūōōn (town), fūōōl (foul)
oi	ɔi	oil	ai	īle, rīle (royal), tie (toy)

*General Practice Material*

Plays: General—Plays by Dunsany, Lady Gregory, Synge, Sean O'Casey.

*A Tune of a Tune*—Dan Totheroh

*The Pipe in the Fields*—T. C. Murray

Poems: *Irish Folk and Fairy Tales*—W. B. Yeats

Stories: *Mr. Dooley Stories*—Finley Peter Dunne  
*The Dreamer's Tales*—Lord Dunsany

Monodramas: "Why Women Should Read Shakespeare" (*Mono-*  
*dramas*)—Bernice Hardy  
*Gaelic Mother Love*—Page 326

## CHAPTER TWENTY-SEVEN

### BRITISH-ENGLISH DIALECT

AN OUTSTANDING trait of the Englishman is his conservatism. He applies this to his theory and practice of social living, his politics or his business philosophy. The Englishman, although he may be merry or even witty, has an ingrained reserve that causes him to keep his feelings masked. He may be capable of every variety of exuberance displayed by the more volatile Americans, but he will not show it in the same open manner. The English have an assurance which impresses Americans as astonishing.

#### *Rhythm*

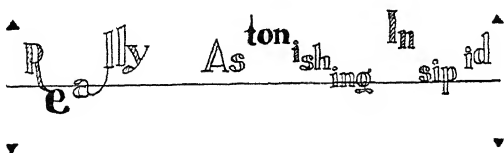
A sustained rhythm is noticeable, partly being the result, perhaps, of the Englishman's trait of rarely being forced to grope for words. Tempo is generally moderate and, at its slowest, may drawl in a manner comparable to Southern Whites. Syllabic beat is intensified by a precise and tense speech attack. To appreciate this attack say the following sentence aloud, giving accent to the italicized syllables: "I've *practic'lly* just *gotten* beek from *America*."

#### *Stress*

Many English seem to talk abruptly, explosively. Much of this effect is achieved by centering attack upon the accented vowel of a word, or from pitch lift within a word, or from the precise formation of consonants, or as a result of concentrating accent upon one syllable of a word. The following paragraphs illustrate.

To illustrate attack upon accented vowels say: *reply*, *answer*, *no*, *absolute*. Place accent on the italicized syllables.

To illustrate stress through pitch inflection consult the inflections shown in the graph in such words as *really*, *astonishing*, *insipid*.

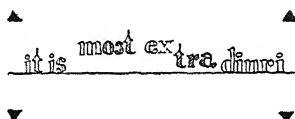


To illustrate precision of consonant strokes say aloud these words, giving consonants full value: "bitter; deepli; rigret; simpli.

The English tendency to elide sounds gives rise to another tendency toward single stress of polysyllabic words—a habit that gives the effect of strong stress. Thus: *ordin'ri*, *secret'ri*, *lit'ry* have their accent focused on the italicized syllables.

### *Intonation*

The dominant pitch is a little higher than American and the range is wider. Fundamental speech tunes follow two types of patterns, according to Jones.\* The principal feature is the placement of the intonational lift. Thus, in such a sentence as, "It is most extraordinary," Americans would tend to maintain a level pitch for the first three words and then inflect "extraordinary." However, the British very often lift the pitch on modifying words (here *most*) and then descend with gradual inflection or with level intervals of pitch change. Thus:



The British question tune also differs from American in that it starts on a high pitch and descends gradually, whereas the American maintains level and rising pattern. The following sentence is a good key: "Do you like it?" (See chapter on Mastering Dialect, page 212).

### *Timbre*

The most characteristic feature of timbre is created through forward focus of sounds or tone projection. A way to achieve this characteristic tone is by a conservative use of the upper lip together with a consistent economy of breath directed toward the upper teeth. Listen to British broadcasts. Test the applicability of this suggestion while attempting imitation.

In the best British speech there is a richness of tone created through fuller use of resonance than is found in the speech of the lesser educated Englishman. Often the lower standard suggests a timbre somewhat bleak, especially in factual utterance.

\* Consult Daniel Jones, *Outline of English Phonetics*, W. Heffer, Cambridge, 1932.

*Pronunciation*

The outstanding characteristic of British pronunciation is precision and clean-cut attack. There is a distinctive vowel attack especially noticeable. "All the vowels of the English language are derived from the ə root vowel when we change the shape of the muscular passage through which the vowel sounds are produced." \* This root vowel (the "ä" of *äbout*) is most obvious in the British attack of "o" and "ou." Thinking this root as basic purifies every vowel sound. It gives the prime cause and simplest method of reproducing the purest of standard English effects which sound-spelling can never quite convey. The following suggestions may help attune the ear to these effects. All sounds are a little "tenser" or "closer" than American sounds.

ā—the effect is closer to the American "ē" with "ī" vanish: thus, *dēi* (day).

ō—initiated with the "ə" attack and "ö" vanish: thus, *səōōō* (so).

ö—extreme British speakers use "aw" for all "ö" sounds: thus, *bawx* (box), *awn* (on), *tawp* (top). In normal pronunciation the sound is farther forward than in American speech.

ī—has the root vowel attack and "ī" vanish—thus, *äice* (ice).

ōō—pronounced very distinctly. Use less lip roundness, remember the conservative upper lip.

ou—is initiated with the "ə" attack, plus a short "ö" vanish: *səōōt* (out).

ä—is more "tense," closer to short "ē." Shade it toward "ē" in these words: *back*, *cat*, *lamp*, *glad*.

ē—often approximates short "ī." In this word list it has definitely short "ī" sounds: *bicome*, *discend*, *rimain*, *ixamine*, *thripence*, *Sundi*, *Ingland*, *lettice*, *biznis*, *veri*, *pritti*.

û—the British sound for the *hurt-bird-earn-world* group of middle vowel sounds is affected by the inactivity of the upper lip. Americans have more of a tendency toward lip rounding in pronouncing these sounds. The British do not sound the "r."

The British show a preference for broad "ä" in contrast to American usage of modulated "ä" and short "ä." A group of words illustrating this includes: *cästle*, *gränt*, *äsk*, *päss*, *äfter*, *dräma*.

r—in such words as *modern*, where the "r" is followed by a con-

\* Bender and Kleinfeld, *Principles and Practices of Speech Correction*, p. 163. Pitman, New York, 1938.

sonant, it is omitted. At the same time the vowel sound preceding "r" takes the sound of "ē" as in "her." Thus: *modē'n* (modern), *consē't* (concert), *effē't* or *effa't* (effort), *chū'n* (churn), *revē't* (revert).

r—when preceded and followed by a vowel the flapped "r" is used. The resulting sound is comparable to "d." Thus, *pediod* (period), *vedi* (very).

r—when final it is always omitted. Sometimes there is no trace of its presence, as in *fā'* (far), *ē'* (air). However, the omitted consonant is often marked by an indefinite vowel glide (ə), or by a definite "ah" sound. Thus, *cheah* (cheer), *winnah* (winner), *spiah* (spire), *cuah* (cure), *boah* (bore), *spāah* (spare), *shuah* (sure).

r—when preceded by a vowel at the beginning of a word is omitted also; thus, *ā'din'ry* (ordinary), *ū'g'nt* (urgent). An exception to this is "r" followed by another "r"; thus, *arrange*, *arrive*.

### Assimilation

Note particularly that the British sounds are placed farther forward in the mouth and assimilate with a different effect from American sounds.

"Syncope," one of the most characteristic phases of British assimilation, has been mentioned under stress in connection with omission of secondary syllables; thus, Edinborough becomes *Edinbro*, secretary is pronounced *secret'ry*, etc.

The effect of double consonants is very distinctive. In American speech it is quite acceptable to pronounce with "sh" assimilation the words "tissue" and "virtue" as *tishue* and *virtshue*. In British speech this is not recognized; Britains will say: *tis-sue* and *vi'tue*.

Their consonantal attack is evident in such combinations as "with them," "is she?" and "miss you." Contrast their precise attack with that which most Americans would use.

This same clean-cut attack is to be noted in phrases which offer vowel combinations: "try it" and "veri old."

Bringing sound combinations farther forward than is customary in American speech has a marked effect on such words as *incomparable*, *length*, *angry*, *think*. The American attack is more velarized; the British is closer to the post-dental.

### Characteristic Phrases and Sentences

"By Jove, that's jolli! Isn't it?"

"My word, what an extradin'ry attitude to assume!"

"I couldn't rightly say, Mary; not to explain it properly."  
 "He's a frightfully stingy sort of bounder, isn't he!"

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	AS IN	BR. Vow.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	eɪ	ale	eɪ	eil (ale), dei (day)
ā	e	vacate	e	vecate, cheotic
ǣ	æ	add	e	edd, hev (have)
ǣ	ə	ǣlong	ə	ǣlong, pǣrticular
ā	a	ask	ɑ:	ǣsk, fāncy, āunt, rāther
ā	ɑ:	alms	ɑ:	alms, fāther, drāught
a	o:	all	o:	all, āwful, tǣk (talk)
ē	i:	see	i:	sēē, machine
ē	i	evoke	i	ēvoke, ēvent
ě	ɛ	elk	e	ělk, many, veri (very)
ī	aɪ	ice	əɪ	ǣice, flǣi (fly), lǣife (life)
ī	ɪ	it	ɪ	it, pritti (pretty), ixcel (excel)
ō	oʊ	so	əoʊ	sǣōō, rǣōōd (rode)
ō	o	obey	əo	ǣobey (obey), Nǣovember
ō	ɔ	off	ɔ	off, hawsiz (horses), cough
ō	ɒ	on	ɔ	on, bawx (box), tawp (top)
ōō	ʊ	good	ʊ	good, put, soot
ōō	u:	food	əu:	food, shoe, move
ū	ju	usual	ju	usual, music, virtue, due
ū	ɜ	hurt	ə:	hurt, bird, earn
ŭ	ʌ	up	ʌ	up, done, blood
ou	ɑʊ	out	əʊ	ɑoot, tɑoon (town)
oi	ɔɪ	oil	əɪ	oil, loyal, toy

*General Practice Material*

Plays: General—Plays by Frederick Lonsdale, Noel Coward.

*Rosalind (Half Hours)*—J. M. Barrie (Part of Charles)

*A Mistake at the Manor*—Maude Morrison Frank. (*Short Plays about Famous People*)

*At the Ribbon Counter*—Gertrude Jennings

*Berkeley Square*—John L. Balderstone

*So This Is London*—Arthur Goodrich

Sketches: *Fun for the Footlights*—Courtney Hope

Monodramas: *An English Woman's Impressions*—Marjorie Moffett  
(The One Woman Show)

*England Not in England* (one man)—Tom Powers  
(Life Studies)

*Rule Britannia*—Page 328

## CHAPTER TWENTY-EIGHT

### SCOTTISH-ENGLISH DIALECT

THE SCOT is noted for his possession of the "common touch" and in all things his approach invariably is based on a practical, common sense view. Outwardly the Scots are reserved, it is only among intimates that they put aside this cloak and reveal deep sentimentality. They are honest, thrifty and sometimes painfully candid—for they enjoy the sport of "bubble-pricking."

Since Scotland is notably poor in natural resources many of the inhabitants are faced with a real problem in making ends meet. Nevertheless, they are not stingy; they are capable of deep generosity when their hearts are touched.

In these people is a spirit of hardihood, of adventure—proved by their ability to acclimatize themselves rapidly when moving to new countries. They have an accurate reputation for being at home in strange places, are excellent colonizers.

#### *Rhythm*

The tempo of Scots is moderate even under many conditions where emotional stress is manifested. There is a tendency toward frequent pause. The "clipped tongue effect" gives this speech just the slightest impression of staccato rhythm. To fix this in mind, say aloud: *stuck attack* and do not follow through the articulation of "ck" before forming the initial vowel of *attack*.

"In reproducing Scottish dialect," an experienced actor confides, "I always think of the tongue action as being inhibited. I remember Barrie saying that the 'tongue is clipped from ear to ear,' and in addition I start most of my strokes from the glottis. Even in tones of forward placement there seems to be an original impulse that springs from glottal attack."

The Scots prefer short words. When several of them are grouped together there is a regular beat. Thus, such a sentence as: "I woul'na / ha' ye / doo't" (I would not have you do it), a noticeable rhythmic beat is evidenced. This arises mainly from stress of "na" "ha," and "doo."

*Stress*

The syllabic accent is standard, save that utterance of consonantal strokes creates a more evident division of syllables. Intonational stress is not employed over a vertical pitch range; it is definitely more horizontal. In such a sentence as "It is strang', David, ower strang" (It is strange, David, over strange), only the word "ower" receives inflection.

The women use more inflectional stress than the men. The latter are inclined to seek intensification through volume.

*Intonation*

The dominant pitch is in a medium key. The range is as conservative as is the Scot's personality. The intonational pattern maintains a level relieved by occasional inflections within words. There is very little glide from phrase to phrase, the pitch changes tending to rise or fall in specific intervals. In these intonational respects the dialect contrasts most interestingly with the Irish. Try the intervals suggested in the following sentence.

*Timbre*

The music of Scottish voices is too subtle for most ears; the common verdict is therefore that it is absent. Many voices reveal an aspirated quality. This is so generally true that some actors, wishing to recall the dialect, begin to speak as though holding a hot potato in the mouth. "Hot potato" speech, as it is called, easily manifests aspirate tone.

Lack of particular vowel glides, restricted intonational range, clipped tongue attack, natural Scottish reserve—these are elements that restrain the voice from manifesting a rich timbre.

*Syntax*

The dialect discussed here is the speech of the Lowlands, the only satisfactory Scottish stage speech—since the Highland speech is uninterpretable. For example, consider this line from a Robert Louis Stevenson poem, *The Maker to Posterity*: "He'll spier; and I his mou' to steik," meaning, "He'll speak; and I his mouth will shut."

In this syntax there is an occasional use of an old fashioned locution, but in general the word order is the same as in modern English.

### *Pronunciation*

It is hard to generalize freely about the vowel sounds of the Scot. For example, it would be tiring and bewildering to recite the reasons why they use long "i" sound in one word and then substitute short "i" or long "ue" in words of the apparently same classification. Scottish, therefore, is one dialect where it is easier to memorize classifications than to master the rules involving vowel usage. Indeed there is no final authority to say why a given vowel used in one word should not be used in another.

ā—The American sound is rarely heard. The best practice is to use the "â" of *care* in words that call for long "a" sound. Thus, *lâte, crâne, mâde, retâin, cremâte*. The following are the principal words using the "â" sound.

ain	own	gae	go, give
ane	one	hae	have
baith	both	laird	lord
bairn	child	nae	no, none
brae	hill	paik	beat
cairn	mound	raize	anger
caird	gypsy	sae	so
daidling	slow	sair	sorrowful
ear	early	tae	to, toe
eard	earth	taiken	token
eath	easily	wae	woe
fae	foe	waefu'	woeful
frae	from	puir	poor

æ—So fond are the Scots of this sound that they employ it in a variety of instances. Thus, apart from its American usage in such words as *all-law-call*, etc. they use it in the following instances.

bawbee	half-penny	jaud	jade
braw	brave	jauk	idle
brawlie	bravely	jaunder	to gossip
ca'	call	jaup	splash
claut	to claw	laup	law
darg	day's labor	maw	to mow
daur	dare	raucle	harsh
daurna	dare not	saul	soul
fa'	fall	saulie	paid mourner
flauchter	to skin	saunt	saint
flaught	a spark	snaw	snow
gaud	gold	twa	two

ē—In addition to its standard usage, this important Scots' sound is often used in substitute for conventional short "i" vowel, thus: *weeth* (with) *opeenion* (opinion) *treeple* (triple) *treep* (trip). It is also substituted for a few long "i" sounds, thus: *eece* (ice) *dee* (die) *weeld* (wild).

ī—The short sound is substituted for long "i" in words of this type: *licht* (light) *micht* (might) *sicht* (sight).

ō—A vowel that receives surprisingly small usage. Either an entirely different vowel takes its place, thus *sâ* (so) *mâist* (most) *hâme* (home); or the sound is deepened until it becomes "oo" (but without lip rounding), thus: *rōōp* (rope) *bloō* (blow) *hoōp* (hope). (Exceptions: such "oa" words as *roam-soap-roar*. These are pronounced with an ō sound.)

ō—For this sound the Scot frequently substitutes "ă" vowel, thus: *lūng* (long) *amāng* (among).

ōō—The Scot substitutes this important sound in many "ou" words: *doun* (down) *shou'd* (should). It is also substituted in monosyllabic "u" words such as: *bōōkle* (buckle) *pōōt* (put) *fōōt* (foot). The following is a representative list of words of this series.

bouk	body	houk	dig
bouman	dairy farmer	houp	hope
bourd	joke	hoose	house
bourock	small hut	jouk	dodge
cou'd	could	lounder	beat severely
cou'dna	couldn't	muckle	much
cour	cover	moop	nibble
couthie	snug	mou'	mouth
doot	doubt	pou	pull
douce	sober	pouk	pluck out
douk	a duck	poupit	pulpit
doun	down	pouse	push
doup	end	round	round
dour	dour	roup	to auction
douse	douse	roupy	hoarse
fouk	folk	routhy	abundant
fouth	plenty	shou'd	should
gousty	gusty	toun	town

ow—This standard English diphthong is changed to long "ōō" in such words as *town-down-out* which are pronounced: *toon-doon-out*.

The following list contains words which do have the authentic "ow" sound.

dow	to be able	low	blaze
downa	cannot	lown	sheltered
fow	fowl	louse	loose
flour	stare frowningly	nowt	a lout
fowf	golf	ponwey	pony
howf	a resort	sowp	mouthful of liquid
howfing	foolish	tow	rope
howk	dig	towsie	rumpled
jowl	a tolling bell	wowf	deranged

### Consonants

A guttural "ch" is employed in such words as *fecht* (fight) *hecht* (offer) *licht* (light) *loch* (lake) *nicht* (might) *nicht* (night) *richt* (right) *sicht* (sight) *ticht* (tight) *wecht* (weight) *dochter* (daughter).

r—The trilled or burred "r" is used. In the *hurt-bird-world* group these words are modified by the "r" sound.

In the "ear" and "er" words such as *term-verse-germ-heart-early* the pronunciation is: *tâirm-vâirse-jâirm-hâirt-âirly*.

In "ir" words there is a slight interval between the coalesced sound. Thus, *firm-bird-sir* have an initial attack represented as: *fî-rm, bî-rd, sî-rr, skî-rt*.

"r" furthermore affects the "â" vowel in such words as *cart-part-harm*. The diphthongal vanishing sound is "i" thus: *câirt-pâirt-hâirm*.

### Assimilation

The flexibility of the Scot's vocal organs is seemingly not enough to help him assimilate sounds easily. Thus, one finds consonants having relatively little effect on other sounds, creating neither many glides nor diphthongs.

Consonant sounds, on being brought together, often do not assimilate easily, the result sometimes being a complete elision. An instance of this is the omitted "g" sound in *len'th* (length) and *stren'th* (strength).

l—In certain cases, mainly word endings, "l" is omitted thus: *a'* (all) *awfu'* (awful) *carefu'* (careful) *fu'* (full) *ca'* (call) *fa'* (fall) *wishfu'* (wishful).

Other important omissions or elisions are: *hae* (have) *ta'en* (taken) *fa'en* (fallen) *na'* (not) *dinna'* (did not, do not) *disna'* (does not) *frae* (from) *gae* (go, give) *mou'* (mouth) *pou* (pull).

*Characteristic Phrases and Sentences*

"Whisht! mind, not a word aboot it."

"D'ye ken? I'll gae alang wi' masel' an' be dressin' in the gu'd silk."

"I dinna think tae set foot in yer hoose agin."

"I'm a sort o' sorry for th' young man."

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	As IN	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	ale	e	āle, báith, hāe, puir
â	e	vacate	e	vacate, gradation
ă	æ	add	a	ădd, mán, bád, ráscal, rán, gáng (go)
ǣ	ə	along	ə	cláng, ye
à	a	ask	ɑ:	ăsk, făst, căn't
ã	ɑ:	alms	ɔ:	ălms, călm, pălm
ą	ɔ:	all	ɔ:	ą', ăuld, brăw, dăur, fą'
ē	i:	see	i:	see, rale (real), fee, grief
è	i	evoke	i	evoke, event, evade
ě	ɛ	elk	ɛ	elk, weel (well), bell
ī	ai	ice	æi-i	eece, dee (die), dry, ah (I), licht
í	i	it	i-i	eet, wi'/weeth
ō	oʊ	so	ɛ-ɔ	sâ, rŏam, sŏap, mâist, hâme
ö	o	obey	ɔ	ŏbey, Nŏvember
ŏ	ɔ	off	ɔ	ŏff, sáft, ither, mâir (more)
õ	ɑ	on	a-ɔ	àn, solid, làng
öo	ʊ	good	u:	gu'd, fŏot, pŏot (put), wŏd (would)
ōo	u:	food	u:	fŏod, muckle, dŏot (doubt)
ū	ju	usual	ju	usual, few, cue
û	ɜ	hurt	u:	hŏort, tăirm (term), wŏord, fî-rm
ű	ʌ	up	u:	ŏop, lŏok (luck), lŏove (love)
ou	ɑʊ	out	u:	ŏot, nŏo (now), doun (down), toon, mou'
oi	ɔi	oil	ai	ăeel, răeel (royal), tăee (toy)

*General Practice Material*

- Plays: *What Every Woman Knows*—J. M. Barrie  
*Storm over Patsy*—James Bridie  
*Nancy Orr's Day* (one act)—Mary Finnegan
- Stories: J. M. Barrie
- Poems: *In Scots*—R. L. Stevenson
- Monodramas: *Hoot Mrs. Tavish*—Page 322

## CHAPTER TWENTY-NINE

### COCKNEY-ENGLISH DIALECT

THESE COLORFULLY speaking people are so often portrayed in the roles of butler and maid that it might almost seem that they exist to provide plays with interesting minor characters. Yet it is true that they work in the service industry. They are noted for sentimental leanings and for loyalty.

The Cockney is a talkative sort, often holding surprisingly astute, if superficial, opinions. Optimism, truculence and a spirit of independence are also to be observed. Sometimes selfishness and stubbornness mar the make-up of these people. One writer notes Cockney enjoyment of food as interestingly revealed by their phrases: "That's the cheese," "Cut it fat," "Settle your hash," expressions traceable to Cockney sources.

#### *Rhythm*

Limp diphthongization and a consonantal attack which is none too precise are both factors of Cockney rhythm. They suggest habitual use of speech organs such as does not allow for quick, flexible manipulation under any circumstances. This sound-spelled sentence illustrates the point:

Thäet blāōōök never arsked 'is lidy if 'e could gāōō.

In spite of the slovenly speech of the Cockney folk, it is not lacking in color or liveliness. The strongest rhythmic accentuation is supplied by the initial vowel attack. Gliding sounds create a characteristic cadence through words.

I'm losing my patience with you.

*Aweem lioosing marwee pishence with yeoo.*

Lengthen and strengthen the attack of the italicized sounds. Notice how this repetitive initial accent creates rhythmic beat.

The general tempo of Cockney speech is moderately slow.

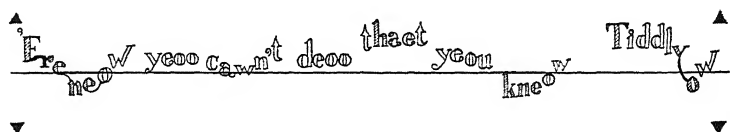
### Stress

Effective stress is employed mainly through syllabic attack and intonation. Force through volume is not so important.

Along with the recurrent syllabic vowel attack there is decided elongation of the stressed vowel; thus, *'old hon thea!* (hold on there!), *artside* (outside), *raweet* (right). This elongation widens the range of intonational glide, another means of Cockney stress.

### Intonation

The dominant pitch is relatively high and it fluctuates a great deal—since Cockney employs a wide intonational range in both masculine and feminine voices. Level intonation is used sparingly. Words are inflected with curved glides. Here is a basic speech tune of Cockney which should be memorized:



### Timbre

Like best British speech, Cockney is produced far forward in the mouth. Both British and Cockney employ strong syllabic attack. But, where best British accent is precise, the Cockney strings his sounds out and produces diphthongs and triphthongs of such inflectional glide as to slacken pace and create the effect of slovenly diction. This extreme glide value often causes the voice to sound metallic or nasal—not, of course, all voices. Extreme elongation of vowels heightens the tendency to produce different voice colors—such as the sharp, metallic or whining.

Deep resonance is not a factor. Head resonance is used, but not chest resonance; nor does additional resonance come from the throat.

### Pronunciation

Cockney vowel variations are caused by three factors. (1) Change of vowel sound, “ā” to “ī” (as in “take” changing to “tīke”), is an outstanding example of vowel change. (2) Change of initial attack. For example, the diphthong “ō” is given an initial short “ĕ” attack (more glottal than British attack). Thus, “ō” is changed into a triphthong, “ō-ōō” to “ĕ-ō-ōō,” as in *rĕ-ō-ōōpe* (rope). (3) Monothongs are diphthongized; diphthongs are triphthongized. For

example, the "ă" monothong of *hand* becomes "ăě" thus: *haend*. The diphthong "ow" as in *how* receives an initial "ă" attack that triphthongizes it: 'aow.

The sound values are strung out with equal evaluation.

ă—The most individual shift occurs in the change to an approximation of long "ī" sound. In practicing this "ă" select words which offer an easy way into the vowel; thus, *lădy* (lady), *lăme* (lame), *lăbor* (labor).

ă—This monothong is diphthongized to "ăě" thus: *hăend*. The final vowel sound is really the root vowel "ə." The Cockney folk sound is not as pure as the British attack. The letter "e" is used generally to emphasize the distinction.

ă—The Cockney prefers the Italian "ă" to the modulated "ă" sound. An "r" is often added to it: *ărsk* (ask), *ărfter* (after).

ē—In a few instances, such as *tay* (tea), the Cockney uses the Old English "ă" vowel. Generally, however, he uses "ē."

ī—The initial attack is "ă" and the vanish is "ē." Thus, ice becomes *aw-eece*; right, *raweet*; bright, *braweet*. Do not give the "w" prominence.

ō—This diphthong is triphthongized by an "ě" attack thus; *ě-ō-only* (only), *rě-ō-ōpe* (rope).

ōō—Diphthongize this monothong by a brisk "ī" attack, thus: *rī-ōōt* (root).

ou—Use initial "ă" attack and an "ōō" vanish, thus: *ăōōt* (out), *tăōōn* (town), *stăōōt* (stout).

*Consonants.* The outstanding feature of consonant utterance is the "h" sound, dropped or appended. The "h" is invariably dropped at word beginnings: 'ouse, 'ome, 'old, etc.

As a rule "h" is added when the preceding word ends in a vowel or semi-vowel or in a consonant which makes an "h" formation practicable. As an illustrative sentence: *Honly John and Hedna went up to hanswer 'enry's angry hattitude.*

*Only* may have "h" attached because nothing impedes such attachment. *Edna* takes the "h" because the preceding "d" offers a chance for easy formation. *Hanswer* is preceded by a vowel and *hattitude* by a semi-vowel. *Up* takes no vowel partly because it is not preceded by a consonant which facilitates such addition and partly because the Cockney's ear would tell him that the sentence already had a quota of additions and omissions.

Addition of "h" is not so prevalent as omission.

th—Pronunciations of this sound, either voiced or unvoiced, suffer some abuses; thus: it is easier to say *farver* than *father*, *wiv* than *with*, *frew* than *threw*.

### Assimilation

There is a gratuitous introduction of "r" after certain vowel sounds:

ö—Such an "r" is heard in instances where this vowel is followed by "f" or "t." Thus: *ort* (ought), *thort* (thought), *orf* (off), *sorft* (soft).

ou—When followed by "t" or "n" the same consonant is inserted, thus: *ort* (out), *abort* (about), *rarnd* (round).

ä—Followed by "f-s-n" is similarly modified. *Larj* (laugh), *'arf* (half), *carn't* (can't), *farver* (father), *arsk* (ask).

There are isolated instances where "r" is introduced for no apparent "rhyme or reason," as in *torking* (talking), *orl* (all).

Some isolated vowel substitutions follow some law of Old English which the tenacious Cockney dialect has retained, or such substitutions may be caused by lazy lip or tongue action. Thus: *yus* (yes), *uns* (one's), *chanst* (chance), *flaar* (flower), *por* (poor), *kerridge* (carriage), *lee go* (let go).

### Characteristic Phrases and Sentences

"I'm going to wait 'ere till she comes art."

"Well, wot are yeoo larfin' at?"

"I dessay ye'll soon find art."

"Look 'ere yeoo, I'm a lidy ain't I?"

### General Practice Material

Plays: General—*Great Modern British Plays*, J. W. Marriott, Editor

*Scaring of Teddy Dawson*—Harold Brighouse

*The Old Lady Shows Her Medals*—J. M. Barrie

*Night at an Inn*—Lord Dunsany

*Kind Lady*—Edward Chodorov

*Pygmalion*—Bernard Shaw

Sketches: *Fun for the Footlights*—Courtney Hope

Poems: Rudyard Kipling (*Mandalay*, *Gunga Din*, etc.)

Monodramas: "The Other" (for woman)—Sydney Box (*Mono-  
logues and Duologues of Today*, London)

*Life Studies* (for men)—Tom Powers

TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	As IN	I.P SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWEL (Sound Spelled when Helpful)
ā	eɪ	ale	aɪ	īle, tike, lidy, mīde, sike
ā	e	vacate	aɪ	vīcīte, chīotic
ǣ	æ	add	æ	ǣdd, cǣb (cab), rǣn (ran)
ǣ	ə	along	ə	ǣlong, attend
ā	a	ask	ɑ:	arsk, larf, starf (staff)
a	ɑ:	alms	ɑ:	alms, ārms, farver (father)
a	ɔ:	all	ɔ:	all, corf (cough), cort (caught)
ē	i:	see	i:	see, seize, key, tay (tea)
ē	i	evoke	i	evoke, event
ē	ɛ	elk	e	elk, said, head
ī	aɪ	ice	ɔ:i:	aw eece, draw ee (dry)
ī	ɪ	it	ɪə	īat, liasen (listen), wīath (with)
ō	oʊ	so	enu	sē-ō-ōō, bē-ō-ōōt (boat)
ō	o	obey	enu	ē-ō-ōōbey (obey)
ō	ɔ	off	ɔ:	orf, sorft (soft), thort (thought)
ō	ɒ	on	ɔ	on, sorry, dog, solid
ōō	ū	good	ū	good, foot, put, woman
ōō	u:	food	ju:	flood, rlood (rude), clood (crude)
ū	ju	usual	ju:	iusual, iyou, fyou (few)
û	ɜ	hurt	ə:	hū't, wūth (worth), dūt (dirt)
ū	ʌ	up	ʌ	up, done, come
ou	au	out	æu:	āōōt, 'āōōse (house), rāōōte (route)
oi	ɔɪ	oil	ɔi:	oil, boy (equalize the 'oi' sounds)

## CHAPTER THIRTY

### ITALIAN-ENGLISH DIALECT

GEOGRAPHICAL POSITION plays a part in shaping the habits and character of a nation, and the warm Italian sun is undoubtedly a factor. It contributes to the rapid maturation of boys and girls and is linked with the warm, sensuous nature of much Italian art.

A close-knit family life is a feature of the Italian domestic scene. *Padre* and *Madre* exercise careful thrift and undergo great hardships to help their children advance educationally and culturally. The women are adept in all domestic virtues. The volatile Latin temperament readily expresses itself in song and laughter. Everything they do is accompanied with lively emotional discussion.

A fondness for fiestas, superstitions, religion, enjoyment of food, a wish to be happy—these things lie close to the hearts of the Italian people.

#### *Rhythm*

Speech tempo is generally fast and is accelerated even more upon provocation. Because Italians add the unstressed root vowel "ə" to many words an unbroken effect of continuity is established. This intensifies the impression of speed.

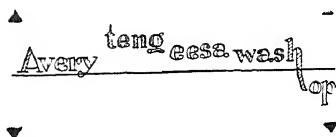
Beat is effected by a *definite change of pitch* which occurs upon the italicized vowels illustrated thus: "Ee'sa gotta de beega da blacka mustache." (Lift on "beega" and then drop in intervals of pitch.) Although vowel sounds are long they are not strung out into diphthongs or triphthongs at any time.

#### *Stress*

There is extravagant use of emotional stress, emphatic treatment being given to all important idea words and adjectives. Syllabic stress is subject to change, but many Italian words are stressed on the next-to-last syllable and this habit of accenting the penultimate is retained in English. In addition, in polysyllabic words, there is a tendency to stress our normally unaccented or secondary syllables; thus, *nec'essa'ry*, *se'conda'ry*, *a'greea'ble*.

*Intonation*

Intonational stress is the Italian stronghold. But it is change of pitch, not sliding inflection, that affects intonation. Note pitch change through level intervals in this characteristic sentence:



Dominant pitch is higher than in American. The pitch range is also greater; the highest tones higher and the lowest tones lower.

Mammen and Sonkin describe the characteristic falling intonational pattern thus: "In three and four syllable phrases the first stressed syllable is sounded on the highest pitch, others show falling intonation unstressed." \* Again, they say, "Stressed syllables which have secondary stress or unstressed monosyllables are kept on a high level pitch." Speak aloud, "Halfa pas' nine las' Satady."

Often, when coming to a full phrase or sentence stop, the Italian drops noticeably in pitch upon the last syllable.

These comments are equally applicable to masculine and feminine voices, the difference being of course that the men's voices are deeper in pitch.

*Timbre*

Their speech is extremely musical, mainly because of a predominance of vowel sounds; Italian is a language wherein almost every word ends in a vowel. Also, the Italian tends to pronounce his vowels strongly and resonantly and the result is a general richness of tone retained in dialect speech. Too, his native language encourages the production of sound with an open throat. The breath is not focused in any way which creates marked nasality, metallic tone or even crisp tone.

*Syntax*

The broad dialect in this chapter represents the speech of the semi-literate Italian. Such people tend to use brief Italian-English sentences. Much of their speech is cast into question form. Again,

\* Mammen and Sonkin, *Study of Italian Accent*, Quarterly Journal of Speech, February 1936.

they are apt to use the personal pronoun for inanimate objects: "the clock, she stop!"

English tense formations evade him. For "she heard me sing there," the Italian is likely to say *She 'ear me seenga dere*. Perhaps the best generalization with regard to tense formation is that there is a positive tendency to suggest present tense.

An adjective form is often used in place of the adverb: *I worka reglar*.

The order of words is often changed and prepositions, connectives and participles are often omitted.

1. I no weesha to be smarta guy.
2. W'y I spoila myself weeth educash?
3. Straighta you coma da point.

### *Pronunciation*

While educated Italians speak English with an accent similar to the French, the dialect of the lesser educated is completely individual. For one thing, the habit of attaching the unstressed "ə" vowel to English words is peculiar to them alone.

Generally speaking, Italian-English reveals vowel sounds which are tenser and longer than American or British vowels. One must listen hard to discover this, for Italian-English is made up quite entirely of monothongs and, thus, an impression of length is not especially evident.

ă—Sound between the "a" of *add* and the "ë" of *elk*. Remember this is a monothong and must not be diphthongized.

ā—This is sounded like a long, tense "ë" or like the circumflex "â" of the American *câre*.

ē—is more open, like American "ä" lengthened; thus *tal* (tell), *avery* (every), and (end).

ī—Sustain the initial "ä" with a short vanish, *fläi* (fly).

ō—this sound is used for the four "u" sounds of the words *good*, *food*, *usual*, and *hurt*.

### *Assimilation*

Apocope, or Italian "troncamento," is the cutting off of the last vowel or syllable of a word in order to serve the purposes of euphony. In the Italian language apocope is practiced most widely; and is apparently responsible for their habit of dropping final syllables of English words; thus, *ambish* (ambition), *educash* (education).

Doubled consonants are sounded as a single prolonged sound; thus, *assept* (accept), *vassinate* (vaccinate), *sujest* (suggest).

Final consonants ("t," "d," and "l" especially) are often omitted or slurred, and words run together. *An' I say a'right, wadayou want.*

### TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. VOW.	I. P.	As IN	FOR'N WORD	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	eɪ	ale	mele	e:-ε:	āle, māke, dāy
ā	e	vacate	"	e:-ε:	vācāte, chāotic
ǣ	æ	add	sella	ε:-a	ǣdd, hāve, hānd
ǣ	ɔ	along	porta	a	ǣlong, ǣbove, ǣnnoy
ā	a	ask	ama	a	āsk, lāugh, āunt
ā	ɑ:	alms	ama	ɑ:	ālms, fāther, ārms
ɑ	ɔ:	all	"	ɑ:	āll, caught, lāw
ē	i:	see	vini	i:	see, people, machine
ē	i	evoke	"	i·	evoke, depend, event
ē	ε	elk	terra	ε:-a	alk, tal (tell), frand (friend)
ī	aɪ	ice	mai	ɑ:i·	āce (or) āēce, fla (fly)
ī	ɪ	it	vini	i·	ect, heem, peen (pin)
ō	oʊ	so	sole	o:	so, know, coach
ō	o	obey	"	o:	obey, morose
ō	ɔ	off	porta	ɔ:	off, cough
ō	ɒ	on	"	ɔ:-ɑ:	on, sorry, dog
ōō	ʊ	good	luna	u	gōōd, full, shood (should)
ōō	u:	food	"	u:	food, move, tomb
ū	ju	usual	"	u:	oozh-ooal, oonite (unite)
ū	ɜ	hurt	"	u:	hoort, woorld (world)
ū	ʌ	up	porta	ɔ-ɑ:	ōp, amōng, blōd (blood)
ou	ɑʊ	out	rauco	ɑ:u	āōōt, 'āōōse (house)
oi	ɔɪ	oil	poi	ɔ:i·	ōel, bōel (boil)

*Table of Consonant Variations*

d-t-n-l—should be sounded with tip of tongue touching upper teeth. (Dentalized.)

h—a variable consonant, most often dropped in such words as *un'appy*, *in'abit*, or in connected speech *will 'ave*, etc. Do not use glottal attack for the vowel following.

k-p-t—not to be given explosive aspiration.

wh—omit the aspirate; thus, *wat* (what), *wen* (when).

th—(breath) sound “t” dentally; *teng* (thing), *tought* (thought).

th—(voiced) sound “d” dentally; thus, *den* (then), *dese* (these).

r—trilled. In Italian this consonant causes no important vowel changes.

s-z—Interchange of voiced and unvoiced sounds is often noticeable; thus, *sinz* (since), *muz be* (must be), *nezessary* (necessary).

*Characteristic Phrases and Sentences*

“My 'at, I keepa 'eem.”

“Celia, she gatta tired queek.”

“After I gotta Honcla Sam's citisansheep pape' I gatta beega jaub.”

“I buy seekesa bonchabanan.”

*General Practice Material*

Plays: *We The People*—Elmer Rice

*They Knew What They Wanted*—Sidney Howard

*Mister Antonio*—Booth Tarkington

*Romance*—Edward Sheldon

Poems: T. A. Daly

Monodramas: “Marie Rosa”—Mary Cecil (*Breezy Episodes*)

“Il Destino”—Clay Franklin (*You're the Show*)

“Little Italy”—Marjorie Moffett (*One Woman Show*)

“Comedie Italiana”—Page 324

## CHAPTER THIRTY-ONE

### FRENCH-ENGLISH DIALECT

THE FRENCHMAN most often characterized in dialect is the Parisian; and, of the Parisian, the chief point to carry in mind is his tendency to be cosmopolitan in manner. Paris is the melting pot of France. There one finds the effervescence, pride, and obstinacy of the Gascons—the practical hardheadedness of the Normans—the dreamy, emotional qualities of the Bretons—the methodical, angular, slow-spoken traits of the Auvergnese.

Gallantry is the universally ascribed characteristic quality of the men; sex appeal and animation of the women; and in both there are generous quantities of Gallic emotion. Then, there is French Logic; insult a Frenchman's logic, thus tapping his emotional reactions, and see what happens!

The French are known for thrift, wit, sophistication, politeness, and for a realistic view toward marriage. The French do not insist upon the element of romantic love if practical considerations make a marriage feasible.

#### *Rhythm*

The general speech tempo is fast. Vowels are always monothongs and because they are briskly articulated, the impression of speed is heightened. "As a general rule the Frenchman has rather a vague idea about the length of his vowels." \* He never drawls them; and even though he learns to diphthongize English vowels, the duration of sounds does not moderate the tempo of his speech to a noticeable degree. Speech, thought, action, all are quick under normal or emotional circumstances.

Syllabic length and accent largely determine the rhythmic pattern. This can be traced directly to French language habits. Their syllables vary little in length. Laura Soames says, "In French the syllables should be all perfectly clear and distinct, like a row of

\* Wm. Nitze and E. Wilkins, *French Intonation*. New York, 1923.

pearls on a string, not weak and confused, with a few syllables coming into prominence here and there." \*\*

The effect of equal length in syllables is especially noticeable in words which have endings unstressed in English—such as *water*, *flashing*, *action*, *agreeable*. The unstressed syllables are given equal syllabic value: "er" is lengthened to "air" thus, *watair*; "ing" becomes lengthened "eeng" thus, *flasheeng*; "tion" is lengthened through substitution of sibilant "sseōn" thus, *acsseōn*; and in *agreeable* both the initial and final syllables are given full value through stress of a modulated "à" sound.

Shortening of syllables is especially prevalent in monosyllabic words such as, *go*, *sea*, *date*, *jump*, *sit*. It cannot be made too impressive that these vowels are pronounced as monothongs and that they will never be lengthened.

### Stress

Their syllabic accent within individual words generally calls for intonational accent of the last syllable. English words of French origin show this tendency: "chauffeur", "bouquet", "debut", all have some slight accent of rising pitch on the final syllable—until they are Anglicized. In French connected speech this individual word accent tends to disappear—which largely accounts for their habit of giving equal stress to all English syllables. The word-group accent used by the French calls for a change in the pitch of the last syllable of the thought or breath group.

Word stress through force means little to the French. If they wish to make one word more important than another they change the word order to give that word greater prominence. Speak this sentence without word force, emphasis:

Now zat I exshange courtesee wees you, please to go away.

Supply stress by an intonational lift of *you* and by an intonational drop on *away*.

When Americans wish to say something emphatic, they reinforce even normally stressed syllables; but the Frenchman transfers accent to another syllable. He will say, in casual speech: "ridiculous". Under emotional stress he shifts accent from the final syllable to the initial one, thus: "ri'diculous." However, if the emotionalized

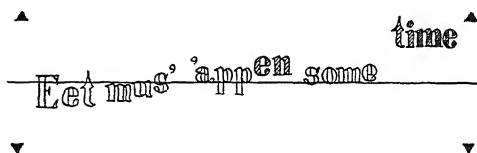
\*\* Laura Soames and Vietor, *Introduction to English, French, and German Phonetics*, p. 141. London, 1913.

word begins with a vowel the accent is placed on the second syllable, thus: Eet ees abso'lutely an impo'ssible seeng!

### Intonation

Dominant pitch is relatively high. Range is extensive, but there are fewer low notes used than high. The tendency is toward crescendo. Klinghardt and Fourmestraux\* say that "The characteristic 'accentuation croissante' or crescendo trend of French speech is the antithesis of the equally characteristic 'accentuation décroissante' or decrescendo trend of English speech."

The general intonational pattern is described by Nitze and Wilkens: \* "The Frenchman begins with a low tone, the pitch ascending gradually and uniformly till the last syllable, but once it is reached, then there is a sudden rise for the syllable, the pitch of this final syllable being much higher than the pitch for the initial tone." To illustrate:



Pitch range often covers an octave. Frequently sentences are left on a suspended note. Use either this pitch lift or the final "jump" down to a low-level tone—instead of the usual American intonational glide.

### Timbre

Here the outstanding characteristic is nasality; but not in the sense we usually use the word. "In all cases, except 'ã,' four separate resonances are recognized; these have been classified as upper, middle, lower, and nasal."† Although the French focus much of the breath in the nasal chambers, *dans le masque*, additional resonance is simultaneously obtained from the mouth and head. Thus, their nasality is not unpleasant—as is American and Cockney twang—in fact, their voices are quite resonant; particularly so because they infuse vowel sounds with a warmth which springs from their easily tapped emotions.

\* *French Intonation Exercises*, translated by M. L. Parker Cambridge, 1923.

† Sir Richard Paget, *Human Speech*, Chapter V. New York, 1930.

The French nasalized vowel, so important in the rendering of their dialect speech, is effected by lowering the soft palate so that the air may pass through the nose as well as through the mouth. Another important feature affecting quality is that the nostrils are extended. No part of the passage is to be pinched.

### Syntax

To give greater prominence to a key word it is often put at the head of a sentence accompanied by an article. Thus: Is the water cold? becomes *Ze watair, eet ees cold?* Do you need a coat? becomes, *A coat you need, yes?* Save for this idiosyncrasy the French find little difficulty in standard English constructions.

### Pronunciation

All French vowels are pure monothongs and, therefore, the French ear is not accustomed to recognizing diphthongal sounds, nor are his articulative agents ready to manipulate such sounds.

The lips are prime agents for French articulation. Be aware of the importance of protruding, pursing, and rounding of the lips. In tongue action pay particular attention to the control of the back of the tongue, and the blade. The French "r" is often the uvular roll. Practice exercises for the soft palate and back of tongue.

English front vowels "ē-ĭ-ā-ě-ă-â" are difficult for the Frenchman. Note these variations.

ē—is quite the same as our sound but shorter of duration.

ĭ—is never used. Instead use "ē" as *eet* (it).

ā—sound it as a monothong close to "â" of *câre*.

ě—a little more open, like the "ă" of *ăsk*. Thus: *frand* (friend), *lat* (let), *rad* (red).

ă—modulated "â" has a number of usages, thus:

1. Use it when "a" begins a word: *amiable, apex, area, away, agree*. Give it full syllabic value.

2. Use it when "a" is followed by a mute syllable: *madame, table, ladle, saddle*.

3. Use it when "a" is followed by "r": *artist, arc, car, arm, bark*.

4. Use it in "age" endings: *rage, page, village*. (Only exception is "age" itself, which is pronounced *ăzh*.)

5. Use it in "able" endings: *agreeable, capable, desirable, table*.

ation—Before the suffix "tion" the French use their "â" sound: *opérâtion, nâtion, râtion*.

u—The French have sounds for “u” and “eu” which are transferred to French-English dialect. When rendering words with the long “u” use a rounder lip action. Purse the lips as if to whistle and sound “u” instead. It should take on the long “ē” quality: *demure, music, habitual*.

ō—Give the “ō” sound, as in *book*, a more rounded lip action. *tōōk, gōōd*.

eu—Use the same lip formation as *demure* but, instead, sound “ea” as in *heard*. Thus: *masseuse, odeur* (odor), *hurt, bird, world*.

ū—The short “ū” as in *up* is often replaced by an open “eu” sound: *up, jump, luck, nut*.

*Diphthongization.* French-English dialect tends to render our diphthongs as two separate vowel sounds of equal value. This is particularly true of diphthong “ī,” and only a little less true of diphthong “ou” and diphthong “oy.” Thus: *ride* is often rendered *rā-ēēd*; *out* is rendered *ā-ōō*; *boy* is rendered *bā-ee*. See vowel table for further illustrations.

### *Assimilation*

*Nasal sounds* give great color to this dialect. There are five vowel-consonant combinations in which the French tend to nasalize the vowel and assimilate the consonant. The consonants which thus tend to be assimilated are “m” and “n.” When they follow vowels they form the famous French nasalized vowels (unless they are followed by a vowel). The vowel-consonant combinations are “īñ-an-ōñ-ūñ.”

1. īñ—is sounded as a nasalized “ā” sound: *āvite* (invite), *āspire* (inspire), *āpossible* (impossible).

2. āñ-ēñ—become a nasalized “ā” sound: *āgry* (angry), *ātair* (enter), *lisā* (listen), *orgā* (organ), *ēñ Frānçais*.

3. ōñ—becomes a nasalized “ō” sound: *buttō* (button), *fashiō* (fashion), *lessō* (lesson).

4. un—becomes a nasalized “u” sound: *ūtil* (until). The Frenchman quickly learns to say such English words as *under-un-cage-unclasp*.

5. tion—becomes a nasalized “syō” sound: *nasyō* (nation), *rasyō* (ration), *avitasyō* (invitation).

Many students, upon mastering these delightfully characteristic French sounds, will be tempted to carry their pronunciation to an

extreme. Refrain, however, for two reasons. First, if reproduced with great fidelity, an audience finds them difficult to interpret. Secondly, the Frenchman is accustomed to sound "m" and "n" in his own language when they are followed by a vowel, and will do likewise with English words very quickly.

Note that these nasalized vowel-consonant combinations may occur at the beginning, middle, or end of a word, for example: *ẽntire*, *ẽntrãncing*, *buttõn*.

Our assimilations in unstressed syllables are not readily grasped. Thus, the "sh" and "j" sounds which occur in such words as "physician-crucial-partial-conscience-ambitious-courageous," are sounded more like *physeesyõ-crusyal-partyal-consyẽns-ambisyos-courazyos*.

In such words as *nature* and *lecture* they tend to give "t" and "u" full value. Our "x" sound in such words as *anxious* is usually rendered as "zh." In such "tch" sounds, as in *sketch* and *ditch*, use the "sh" sound without "t," thus: *skesh*, *dish*. The "g" of *huge* and the "dg" of *badge* tend toward the "zh" sound, thus: *huzh*, *bazh*.

"er" endings, such as "water," are pronounced as "air": *watair* (water), *evair* (ever), *ozair* (other).

Jones speaks of the French habit of making "assimilations of voice to breath and breath to voice where they are not required." \* Thus, they are apt to pronounce *metsin* (medicine), *anegdot* (anecdote), *opserve* (observe), *apsaird* (absurd), *apsolute* (absolute), *plantioff time* (plenty of time), *ligezat* (like that).

### *Characteristic Phrases and Sentences*

"Zees terreible affair 'appen enroute from ze gay Paree."

"Oui! Oui! Zat ees my agreeable chauffeur."

"Voila Monsieur! I go."

"Ovair zair ees my seestair's apartment."

\* D. Jones, *Outline of English Phonetics*, Chapter XVII. New York, 1922.

*Table of Consonant Variations*

- d-t— Rarely sounded when final, especially when the following word begins with a consonant. *An'* (and), *lan'* (land), *mus'* (must), *protes'* (protest). Pronounce these consonants as pre-dentals: use the blade of the tongue against the cutting edge of the upper teeth, rather than the tip against teeth ridge.
- ch— The hard sound is often softened to "sh." *Sharm* (charm), *exshange* (exchange), *shance* (chance).
- h— Elide, since "h" is used in very few parts of France. *'appy* (happy), *'ouse* (house), *'ung* (hung).
- j— Has a "zh" sound: *zholly* (jolly) *zhoin* (join) *zhomp* (jump).
- k-g— Bring the tongue farther forward: *kick*, *gun*.
- l— This sound is often breathed, as in: *peopl'* (people), *tabl'* (table).
- ng— The French tend to substitute a "gn" sound, as in their word *Montaigne*. This sound is similar to the "nio" of *onion*. Place the tip of the tongue against the lower teeth and the middle of the tongue against the hard palate. Used in words like: *singer*, *bring*, *thing*, *anger*, *younger*.
- r— Use either the trilled "r" or the uvular roll.
- s-z— The tendency is to use sibilant "s" for word endings: *please* (not pleez), *'appens* (not happenz), *ees* (iz), *because* (not becauz).
- th— When voiced it has a "z" sound: *zees* (this), *zen* (then), *zose* (those). When unvoiced it has an "s" sound: *seenk* (think), *sought* (thought), *sank* (thank).

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. VOW.	I. P.	AS IN	FOR'N WORD	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	ale	même	ε:	âle, dâyl, tâble, greât
ă	e	vacate	blè	ε:	vâcate, chaotic, invitation
ă	æ	add	patte	a	ădd, hăve, băde
ǎ	ə	long	de	ə	ǎlong, chinǎ, ze (the)
â	a	ask	patte	a	âsk, bâth, fâncy
a	a:	arm	pas	u	arm, alms, heart
â	o:	all	côte	o:	ôll, lô (law), côt (caught)
ē	i:	see	fini	ɪ	see, tea, people
ê	i·	evoke	si	i	evoke, evānt (event)
ě	ε	let	été	a	lât, tâl (tell), frând (friend)
ī	ai	ice		a+i-a	â-eece, lâ-eek (like)
ĩ	ɪ	it	petite	i	eet, heem (him), beeze (busy)
ō	oʊ	so	rose	o	so, road, know, sew, beau
ô	o	obey	"	o	obey, molest
ö	o	off	note	o	off, soft, cough
ö	o	on	"	o	ôn, sörri, börrow
öö	ʊ	good	tout	u·	gööd, pööt (put), pööl (pull)
oo	u:	food	rue	u:	food, move, wound
ũ	ju	usual	une	y	ȳsual, unite, mȳsic
û	ɜ	hurt	peur	φ	heurt, beurd (bird)
ũ	ʌ	up	œuf	œ-ɔ	op, among, done
ou	ʊʊ	out	côte	o:-a+u	ôt or âööt, fôl (foul), rôn' (round)
oi	ɔɪ	oil		ɔ+i·	öel, royal, toy

*General Practice Material*Plays: *Divorçons*—Victorien Sardou*Fleurette and Company*—Essex Dane*M'sieur Beaucaire*—Booth Tarkington"Paris Sets the Styles" (short farce)—William E. Jones  
(*Two by Two*—Baker)*The Silhouette and Stars*—Olive Price  
(Debutante Plays)Monodramas: "French Farce"—Clay Franklin (*These Mortals among Us*)*Canzonet*—(see page 319)

## CHAPTER THIRTY-TWO

### SPANISH-ENGLISH DIALECT

THE SPANIARD is generally considered intense, proud, dignified, courteous, brave, and possessed of at least a latent sense of individuality. Best judges of Spanish character describe it as possessing "unity in spite of varieties"; for there are many distinct Spanish types.

Seemingly the most representative are the Aragonese. These people reputedly are spontaneous, frank, opinionated and uncompromising, and are richly possessed of Spanish pride and independence.

Astureans are very hardy, thrifty and vivacious. They have a sense of the poetic.

The Basques are foresters and fishermen. This province has been strongly connected with the clerical Catholic movement. The Basques have that positivism usually in peoples of strong religious tendencies; they are stern, loyal, simple and uncompromising. Loyola, the religious leader, came from this province.

The Catelonians have a more ancient heritage of unity and freedom, instilled before Spain became a nation. As a result they tend to think first as Catelonians and then as Spaniards. They have a gift of expressiveness and a fierce burning individuality.

The Valencians, mostly peasants, have passions more easily touched off than those of their northern cousins.

If the Basques bring force to Spanish character, the Andalusians bring to it a leavening grace. It is a province rich with a sense of the esthetic. It is a land of flower and song, companionable and suave.

Castilians have a quiet assurance and an attitude of respect not oiled by subservience. They have a genuine fellow-feeling and, of all Spaniards, seem best endowed with a natural notion of equality—proved by their readiness to extend fraternity.

In general Spanish people are very sensitive and very emotional. Whenever they express something of importance they illustrate their

thoughts with movement and gesture. No matter how much the Spaniard associates with American people, he is always a Spaniard in this respect.

### *Rhythm*

The general tempo conveys an impression of speed in factual speech and decided acceleration in emotional speech. The rhythmic measure is made obvious by precise articulation. The effect of very clear formation of sounds and the lack of glide from sound to sound and word to word create a staccato effect. Sounds are generally short of duration. Vowels are pure, clear and well measured. English diphthongization and glide are rarely acquired. Speak the following with extreme jaw movement and an even staccato beat.

"A peseta?" "No—Señor, I am not so cruel."

Syllabic accent, though often misplaced, creates an emphatic rhythmic beat through forceful attack and intonation.

### *Stress*

The Spaniard ends syllables with a vowel whenever possible, thus: *e-ne-my*. Spanish has precise rules for stress and some of these stress habits are applied to English. Thus, a Spaniard tends to accent most final syllables, viz.: *people, final, accent*. Exceptions are words which end with a vowel or "n" or "s" sound. In such cases accent is placed on the next to last syllable (penultimate) thus: *primary, sustain, revenue*.

Note that in long words the Spaniard often uses two quite equal stresses: "recommendation" might be divided as *rêcâmmân-dâshân*.

English word stress when used to change meanings is baffling to the Spaniard. An American says: "I saw *him*," and "I *saw* him," and conveys different meanings through accent. The Spaniard uses different words. Thus, "I saw this gentleman," and "I saw him plainly." By choosing different words the Spaniard takes away from his sentence stress and tends to produce an even-measured speech.

### *Intonation*

The dominant pitch is high. In emotional speech the range is great, but in factual remarks intonation varies little.

The characteristic tunes show rising intonation with peaks of intonational prominence in stressed vowel sounds of words. Think

of Spanish as a very phonetic language where each sound tends toward unusually distinct enunciation.

▲ Musical program the Colombia Broadcastign Sees ▲  
 tam

### Timbre

It is positive, distinct, intense and colorful. There is a full-flavored quality that often gives the suggestion of a sharp twang. Be aware of full use of mouth resonance. There are only a few throaty sounds: "ch" and "j." The sounding of vowels with great precision is the greatest aid to characteristic Spanish tone. As a key suggestion, keep in mind the idea of intensity.

### Syntax

The greatest differences in word orders is used for the sake of emphasis, although there may be many omissions of small words. A common practice of the less educated, as is the case among most foreigners, is to utter the key words of an idea.

### Pronunciation

The Spanish use of monothongs cannot be over-emphasized. Purez de Vega, dramatic critic of *La Voz*, says: "The most confusing element of English for the Spanish speaking people is undoubtedly the vowels. Spanish has five vowels and each has but one sound. But English vowels, contrary-wise, have so many different values and sounds."\*

The Spaniard's habitual use of five vowel sounds is the key to understanding his English pronunciation. These sounds are the only ones used in Spanish (though they can be combined) and each is a pure monothong. The sounds are:

â	—	as in	câre	(Spanish letter e)
ä	—	"	fäther (	" " a)
ō	—	"	sōft (	" " o)
ē	—	"	ēve (	" " i)
ōō	—	"	fōōd (	" " u)

The Spaniard often, of course, uses these vowels in combination. One combination is called "strong-weak vowels": *ai, au, oi, ou, ei, eu*.\* Reverse them and one has the "weak-strong vowels": *ia, ua,*

\* Purez de Vega, *Spanish Grammar*.

*io, uo, ie, eu.*\* Whenever the Spaniard hears an American diphthong that reminds him of one of these strong-weak or weak-strong vowel combinations he naturally makes the substitution. This is the explanation of the elaborate way in which a Spaniard seems to pronounce American diphthongal values. Note the principle at work in these American vowel sounds as the Spaniard thinks they exist: *āēs* (ice) *āōōt* (out) *vōēse* (voice) *yōōlōzhy* (eulogy) *vēōlet* (violet) *skōōālōr* (squalor) *ēāmbec* (iambic) *quēsteon* (question).

"Be ever aware of forceful use of lips and jaw," says J. Moreno. "The main difference between English and Spanish is that the English mode of articulation is 'lax' while the Spanish is 'tense.' Spaniards move the lips and jaws more than the tongue. In Spanish the tongue is much farther forward, it is the upper part of its tip (never the lower) that touches the upper teeth or gums. The lips are much more active than in English; they take precise and extreme positions and are strongly and firmly rounded, protruded or contracted. Jaws are brought into full action, opening more widely (not stretching, as in yawning) or closing more firmly than in English." \*\*

If the above is borne in mind in practicing the monothongs and the strong-weak and weak-strong diphthongal combinations of Spanish, it will soon be surprisingly easy to reproduce with impressive accuracy all the color and uniqueness of Spanish dialect.

### *Assimilation*

The use of the glottal stop (?) is an important element to reproduce. The Spaniard uses this sound before words beginning with a consonant. It is best to use the sound to introduce "s" words in particular, thus: (?) street, (?) special, etc.

The most colorful element of this dialect might be said to result from the Spaniard's inability to assimilate English sounds. To illustrate this, the following practice sentences are accompanied with a detailed sound-spelling. At first glance the sound spelling may look complex; actually it is very easy.

### *Characteristic Phrases and Sentences*

"That ridiculous recommendation."

"Dāt rēdēcōō'lōs rācāmman'dāshān."

"Do you recognize the picture?"

"Do you rēcōnyāze dē pēctōōr'?"

\* These letters are Spanish.

\*\* J. Moreno, *Elements of Spanish Pronunciation*, New York, 1918.

"Spain prefers to die on her feet, rather than live on bended knee."

"(?) Spâin prêfeerse to dâē ōn hêr feet, râdêr dân leev ōn bêndêd knee."

"Of music, poetry, and madness we all have a little."

"Of mōōsēcō, pōêtrê and mādnhêss, oōē āll hâve a lētll."

### Table of Consonant Variations

- d— Formed with tongue tip against the cutting edge of upper teeth, giving the effect of voiced "th" weakened, thus: *sathle* (saddle), *mithle* (middle).
- h— Often elided in connected speech: *come 'ear, take 'eart*. Make it throaty in words like *inhabit*. The throaty sound is characteristically heard in monosyllables: *harp, heart*.
- j— This has a guttural sound similar to Scottish "ch." La Hoya (La Jolla). Hard "j" becomes *zhoy* (joy), *zhump* (jump), *zhoke* (joke).
- l— Very liquid. Press tip of the tongue against palate just behind the teeth: *live, people, lull*.
- ng— Sounded as "gn" (the nasal Spanish "ñ": *Senor*). It is similar to American *onion*. Keep center of the tongue close to the hard palate: *sing, bring, canyon*.
- r— Heavily rolled, especially between vowels; *arrow, borrow, arouse*. A lighter trill when following consonants, thus: *tree, bring, trill, streak*.
- r— In the *hurt-bird-world* group retain the vowel sound according to the spelling and sound the trilled "r" thus: *hoort* (hurt), *berd* (bird), *har* (her), etc.
- s— Always sharp, never voiced as in *easy*. Sharpen these sounds: *grease, increase, slips, sweeps*. A sharp "s" at word endings sounds like "ts" thus; *perrapts* (perhaps).
- t— Sound with forceful tip of tongue against cutting edge of upper teeth: *bitter, batter, butter*.
- th— South American "Spaniards" often substitute "z" sound. Also, breath "th" is dentalized thus: *tank* (thank); and voiced "th" thus: *dese* (these).
- w— Sounded as vowel "ōō" thus; *ōōäss* (was), *ōōâde* (wade). Use this sound for "wh" as in *ōōâh* (when).

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	As IN	FOR'N WORDS	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	ale	mesa	ε:	āle, câre, dây
ă	e	vacate	"	ε	vâcâte, chăotic
ă	æ	add	mesa	ε-α	add, hâve, hând, tângo
ă	ə	ălong	"	α	ălong, ămong, tha(the)
â	a	âsk	"	α:	âsk, bâth, task
â	α:	alms	patio	α:	âlms, Cástaliă
ă	ɔ:	all	patio	ɔ-α	ăll, căught, brôught, wâr
ē	i:	see	si	i:	see, key, seize, machine
ē	i	evoke	"	i:	evoke, event, enough
ě	ε	elk	mesa	ε:	âlk, âvâry (every), ând (end)
ī	ai	ice	aire	ai·	ăēēce, or âce, or tâme (time)
ī	ɪ	it	si	i:	ēēt, bēesēē (busy)
ō	oʊ	so	soy	ɔ	sō, bōth, rōad, ōld
ō	o	obey	"	ɔ	ōbey, tōbăccō, Nōvêmbêr
ō	ɔ	off	"	ɔ	ōff, gōne, dōg
ō	ɒ	on	"	ɔ	ōn, sōrry, cōme, ōdder (other)
ōō	ʊ	good	uno	u	gōōd, fōōt, put, woman
ōō	u:	food	"	u:	food, lōse, rŭde, shōe
ũ	ju	usual	viudo	iu:	eŭshōōăl (usual), mōōsēc (music)
û	ɜ	hurt			hōōrt (hurt), bērd (bird)
ū	ʌ	up	patio	ɔ-α	ōp or âp, dōst (dust), cōstăm (custom)
ou	αʊ	out	causa	au·	ăōōt, tăōōn (town), făōōnd (found)
oi	ɒɪ	oil	oigo	oi·	ōēēl, rō-ē-ăl (royal)

*General Practice Material*

Plays: Character parts from Martinez Sierra plays

*The Kingdom of God*—Sierra

*The Buccaneer*—Anderson—Stallings

*The Bad Man*—Porter Emerson Browne

*Russet Mantle*—Lynn Riggs

*A Sunny Morning* (comedy of Madrid)—Alvarez Quintero

## CHAPTER THIRTY-THREE

### GERMAN-ENGLISH DIALECT

THE GERMAN responds readily to discipline, and has a love of order. The great gifts of these people in the way of organizing ability are well known, and their business efficiency is a byword. They are singularly industrious, thrifty and clean.

The German has a great sense of personal dignity. Along with his inclination toward the methodical, he is ever seeking to justify himself in all situations—though he may not say this in so many words.

He has a healthy respect for titles, recognizes degrees of caste and rank, and evidences a great delight in uniforms and orders. A hunter, for instance, takes pleasure in demonstrating by his costume and ornaments that he really is a hunter. Where Americans are apt to be free and easy in dealing with celebrities, the German feels conscious that the celebrity has earned his position, therefore should be bowed to.

#### *Rhythm*

His orderly, methodical mind shows in his speech rhythms. The general tempo is slow in both factual and emotional expression. Accent is affected by unusual depth and force of vowel attack; rhythmic measure by sustained vowel sounds. German vowel sounds are very generally heavy and of long duration. This is especially noticeable in vowels at the end of words and in stressed syllables: *so*, *me*, the third syllable in *exclamation*, etc.

Although individual sounds may be long, words used in connected speech are generally short. There is apt to be little variation in the length evaluation of phrases. Sentences tend to be short. Also, a tendency toward a logical sentence-casting results in a repetition of logical accents.

Practise a few suggestive key words that serve to establish a "feel" for timing. Say *Ach ya, dat iss goodt*. *Ach* and *goodt* should be spoken with deep guttural attack, and the vowel sounds should be sustained.

### Stress

The syllabic accent, like American, is most apt to be placed on the stem syllable. German-English may be quickly characterized, however, by the force of this accent—which is greater than Americans apply. Important words are given added weight and depth when accented in German fashion. The method of syllabication differs from American in words made up of a stressed and unstressed syllable. Americans have no syllabic division in words like *bottle*, *pity*, *gutter*. The German makes the stress boundary obvious: *bo-tle*, *pi-ty*, *gu-ter*.

"Accentuation of German words and sentences is almost identical with the accentuation of English and does not present much difficulty." \*

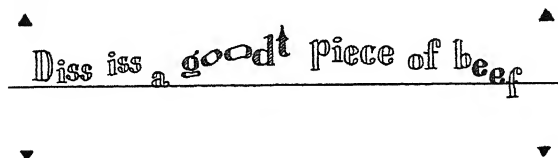
Stress groups made up of adjective and noun offer a little variation. In American speech equal stress is given to both words, but the German gives stronger stress to the noun: "the young *man*." "Saturday *evening*."

The accent may be shifted as in English to emphasize any word in the sentence, thus: "*I* saw him," "I *saw* him," or "I saw *him*."

### Intonation

The dominant pitch of the German voice tends to be a little higher than the American. Under emotional stress the pitch rises. The emotional range is especially wide.

The general speech pattern shows rising-falling intonation, with considerable use of inflection. The German vowels, long of duration, are capable of colorful modulation. The rising inflection is used for questions, but in declarative speech rising inflection would suggest weakness and indecision to the German. His sentence endings are final and positive in tonality.



### Timbre

Because of the many throaty sounds this dialect is rendered with a heavy guttural timbre. In the case of feminine speech there is a consequent lessening of guttural quality.

\* Soames and Vietor, *Introduction to English, French, and German*, Chapter X. London, 1898.

### Syntax

The greatest changes in word order occur through misplacement of the verb (often placed at sentence endings) or a change in the verb form. *Mrs. is wid de baby oudt* splits the verb form. *You be surprised* indicates a common kind of tense confusion.

### Pronunciation

Vowel sounds are longer in duration than are American. Use the mouth with more lip roundness for characteristic German articulation, also keep aware of the back-of-the-tongue action.

For initial vowels open the mouth wider than for American speech and give full value. Say these words: "*animal, agree, after.*" Maintain this lengthened initial vowel attack even in monosyllables such as: *ask, arm, all*, etc.

Diphthongization is general in this dialect. Sustain the attack in these words: *la-eet* (light) *sa-eed* (side) *da-oon* (down).

ō—a sound not generally diphthongized. Rather it is likely to be pronounced as the "o" monothong: *pöst office*.

### Characteristic German Sounds

The umlaut sounds "ä, ö, ü," are important to this speech. Form them with pursed lips, preparing the tongue position as if to sound the long form of their pronunciation; instead sound "ē". An umlaut might be called a long vowel with a strong "ē" vanish.

"ö" may often be used in such a phrase as *danke schön*, (meaning "thank you").

The umlaut sounds are particularly important for words which fall within the *hurt, bird, world, her* classification. Use the umlaut sound of the letter appearing in the word, and be sure to use the guttural "r" gargled.

*Ich*—sometimes called the "ich laut",\* is a very distinctively German sound. *Reich* and *nicht* make use of the sound. Form it with the tip of the tongue touching the lower teeth and the front of the tongue raised toward the hard palate leaving a very narrow air passage. This sound may often be used by Americans in such words as *human* or *huge*. It is quite the same as the Scotch sound used in *loch* except that the German sound tends to be more guttural. The most hoarse or throaty formation of the sound is used with "a,"

\* D. Jones, *Outline of English Phonetics*. 1920.

“o,” or “u”; *ach*, *nocht*, or *buch*. A German actor’s tip for this sound is to “smile a reversed snore.”

*The Glottal Stop* (ʔ). It is common practice for the German to use this sound in attacking words beginning with a vowel thus:

(ʔ) *evening*, (ʔ) *old*.

### *Assimilation*

In connected speech the voiced and unvoiced consonants “b-p,” “d-t,” “g-k” are either exchanged or sounded alike, each borrowing from the other. To suggest this partial sounding, the dialect often uses the exchange of letters, as *ban* for *pan*, etc. Too decided a change suggests a distinctly Dutch accent. Word endings “b- d- g” have a fading effect of “p- t- k,” thus: *grabp* (grab), *goodt* (good), *bagk* (bag), *gladt* (glad). Note the opposite exchange in these words; *libp* (lip), *hidt* (hit), *pigk* (pig).

### *Characteristic Phrases and Sentences*

In connected speech there is an especially long and deep prominence to vowel sounds. Daniel Jones makes comment on the following German greeting: *Hääōō dōō you dōō*. Note also:

“Ach, danke schön! Dees ees goodt, ya vunderbar.” \*

“Ven vee game ober to Amarēka ve vas so gled to zee de shtatue off Liberdy.”

“Mine leedle boyss, Cheorge und Sharlie iss mit dere mudder.”

*Table of Consonant Variations*

- b— Use no throat attack before releasing sound. Often it is similar to aspirated “p,” thus: *clubp* (club).
- c— Often sounded as “ts” before “e” or “i.” *tsifer* (cipher), *tsent* (cent).
- d— Often unvoiced: *badt* (bad), *gladt* (glad).
- f— Formed with lips and strong breath escape.
- g— Often unvoiced: *bigk* (big), *digk* (dig). Often it substitutes for hard “c.” *Gome* (come), *gall* (call).
- j— Substitute “ch” thus: *chust* (just), *chutch* (judge), *Cherman* (German), *cholly* (jolly).
- l— Use a clear “l” sound, formed with tongue tip.
- ng— Coalesce it as in *singer*, not as in *finger*. It is sometimes replaced by “k”: *singk* (sing).
- p— Very often the same as the “b” sound.
- r— Most characteristic when gargled. Reich. At end or middle of a word use the *uvular roll* with force. *Amarica*. This always deepens preceding vowels, but it does not otherwise change them: Note that in the ‘*bird-world-hurt*’ group the German brings an umlaut quality into the words.
- s— Sharper than in English and unvoiced: *hiss* (his).
- st— An “sh” sound is introduced: *shtudent* (student). Also “sp” and “sch” combinations take on the “sh” sound: *shpelling* (spelling), *shkool* (school). Protrude the lips while enunciating.
- th— When unvoiced it often is sounded as “t”: *t’ink* (think), *t’ank* (thank).  
When voiced it often is sounded as “d”: *d’at* (that), *d’ose* (those).
- v— Often unvoiced: *giff* (give), *liff* (live).
- w— (Also “wh”) is sounded like “v”: *vay* (way), *vind* (wind). Bring the lips together without rounding.
- x— Pronounced as “s”: *estingwish* (extinguish), *esact* (exact), *esplain* (explain).
- z— Has a “ts” sound at word beginnings; *tsink* (zinc); it has “sh” sound in such a word as *ashure* (azure).

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	As IN	FOR'N WORD	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	ale	ehre	e:	alc, take, day, cape, great
â	e	vacate	"	e:	vacation, gradation
ă	æ	add	gelb	ε:	edd, hev (have), steb (stab), mān
ǻ	ə	along	eine	ə-a	ālong, āccount, de (the)
â	a	ask	lamm	a:	bāth, lāmb, āsk
ä	ɑ:	alms	"	a:	ālms, fādder (father)
ǣ	ɔ:	all	"	a:	āll, brāht (brought)
ē	i:	see	biene	i:	see, machine, key
ê	i	evoke	"	i:	evoke, event, reverse
ě	ε	elk	gelb	ε:	elk, many, spell
ī	ai	ice	ein	ai:	āeece, lāeet (light)
ĭ	ɪ	it	bin	ɪ	ĭt, skin, busy
ō	oʊ	so	wohl	o:	so, go, wrote
ö	o	obey	"	o:	obey, morose
off	ɔ	off	Gott	ɔ	off, cough, gone
ö	ɒ	on	"	ɔ	on, sorry
oo	ʊ	foot	dumm	ʊ	fōōdt (foot), volff (wolf), gōōdt (gōōd)
oo	u:	food	gut	u:	fōōdt (food), rōōm, shoe
ü	ju	usual		y	ūsual (slightly umlauted)
û	ɜ	hurt	herr	ɜ:	hairt, baird (bird)
ũ	ʌ	up	kopf	ɔ	öp, öntil, döne
ou	ɑʊ	out	haus	ɑʊ	āōōt (out), hāōōse (house)
oi	ɔɪ	oil	leute	ɔy	öeul, töeu (toy)

*General Practice Material*Plays: *Little Women*—Marian de Forest*The Melting Pot*—Israel Zangwill*Rip van Winkle*—Joseph Jefferson

Monodramas: "Nocturne"—Clay Franklin

*(These Mortals Among Us)**Gemütlichkeit*—(See page 321)

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FOUR

### RUSSIAN-ENGLISH DIALECT

RUSSIANS INHERIT the Slavic tendency to yield themselves utterly to their emotions and ideas, and they are likely to exhaust themselves physically with the force of their efforts. On the other hand, it must be borne in mind that the overwhelming proportion of Russians are only a few generations removed from serfdom. This is as much as to say that old serf habits of caution, deliberateness and fear still tend to shackle real Russian temperament.

The now expunged aristocracy was admittedly over-civilized in many respects. Their removal has created a somewhat unbalanced social situation in Russia. Sociologically speaking, it is the so-called better elements of a population which stimulate the great body to emulation. With Russian aristocracy gone, this office is filled by the government itself—with the result that while Russian culture is growing, it tends to be ideological—which is to say stiff and doubtfully motivated.

Russian character is inclined to be as complex as it is friendly in its social aspect. Russians are a people responsive, forward-looking, sad, somewhat dreamy and capable of great extremes. These extremes should be shown by long lines of physical movement, and in speech patterns as well as in the extremes of emotional response.

#### *Rhythm*

The general tempo of this speech is moderate. It often is marked by a very impressive rhythm both through duration of phrase and effective weighty pause. Emotional speech shows extremes of tempo and of phrase variations. Russian plays such as those listed in the suggestions for practice show the use of lengthy emotional speeches which offer wide variations in rhythmic utterance.

Mistakes in sound lengths are most characteristic. S. C. Boyanus says, "Russians learning English fail to make long vowels long enough, and short vowels short enough." \*

\* S. C. Boyanus, *Manual of Russian Pronunciation*. London, 1935.

There is one very distinct syllabic beat stressed in long words. That accent, however, is very often misplaced. This aspect is dealt with under stress.

### *Stress*

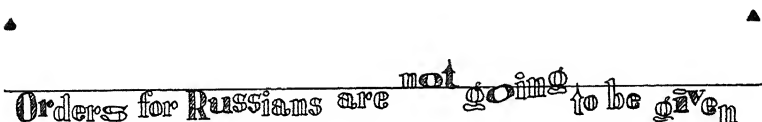
Russian stress is vivid, handled with considerable output of energy. It is colorful in pitch, and forceful in attack. In his own speech the Russian is accustomed to a strong syllabic accent on only one syllable of a word. American secondary stress is baffling to him. This is a strong element to reproduce. In such words as *participial*, *extemporaneous*, *municipality*, *particularly*, the strong stress may be placed on any one syllable with other syllables uttered evenly. The placement of that stress is uncertain because in the Russian language there is no fixed rule for the placement of syllabic stress.

Vowel length is the Russian means of intensifying meaning. Force and length of sounds creates shades and half shades of thought in Russian speech.

There is a strong tendency to stress terminations or prefixes in connected speech: "*unlimited*," "*speechless*," "*bespeak*," and "*come out*."

### *Intonation*

The dominant pitch is generally low. The range is especially wide in emotional speech. The strongest difference between the Russian and the American intonational pattern is to be heard in the glide. The American uses level descending tones, and the Russian tends to use an upward glide. Follow the stress and intonation suggested in the following.



### *Timbre*

Timbre is a highly important feature to reproduce. Russians are accustomed to changing the meaning of a word by the change of vowel and consonant quality, hard or soft. This practice makes it plain that speech color means much to these people. The timbre may have many variations—warm, flexible, vigorous, sparkling, or

throaty, husky, and guttural. At all times tones have resonance—chest, mouth, and head. The characteristic broadness of tone for men's voices may be aided by drawing the corners of the mouth down, at least this is a device used by an actor of Russian parts in broadcasts. The speech of women shows a capacity for most tender and seductive nuances.

### *Syntax*

This speech frequently offers amusing and almost incomprehensible word orders. There is no rigid order of words in the Russian language; thus the same freedom is applied to English speech. A possible order is shown in the sentences following: *Mary ours altogether not happy. Yesterday by him was hot and today is cold.*

Study of the language makes such peculiarities of arrangement and strange verb forms understandable. "The auxiliary verb 'to be' is not translated into Russian when used in the present tense." \* So the Russian says: *this (is) tea; where (is) dictionary?*

In like manner *I speak, I glad, and I happy* convey their thought without *am*. As Bondar says, "The progressive form of the verb does not exist in Russian."

There is a noticeable tendency to omit prepositions or to give them added emphasis. This too may be traced to old speech habits, for in their own language the preposition is included as a syllable of the word, and is treated with special nuance.

### *Pronunciation*

The most general recommendation for the reproduction of Russian formation of sounds is to accent lip action and to depress the back of the tongue. The tongue position deepens sounds. Though the Russian has used sounds quite similar to many English vowels, he very often misplaces those sounds in his English speech. Another very strong characteristic that has been noted under Rhythm is the tendency to make long vowels (ē, ī, ōō, etc.) too short and short vowels (ě, ĭ, ō, etc.) too long.

ā—the sound is close to "ě" deepened and shortened: *eble* (able), *fece* (face), *em* (aim).

ă—is sounded as "ě" or "ä"—though "ä" may be used for "ě" words: *hënd* or *händ* (hand), *ăvery* (every).

â—deepened to "a": *awsk* (ask), *awnt* (aunt).

\* Bondar, D., *Simplified Russian Method*, Isaac Pitman, London, 1936.

ä—also deepened: *alms, father, castle*.

ē—often sounded as “ī”: *sĭ* (see), *bĭ* (be).

ī—shortened in duration: *fight, try*.

ō—often shorter and deeper, thus: *hōme, ōld*.

ōō—a little longer, ȯȯ—a little shorter; but both deeper in color: *should, too*.

### Assimilation

Uncertainties are shown in some word endings such as:

dg—sounded as ch: *âch* (age), *courach* (courage), *chudch* (judge).

gn-ng—often sounded thus: *deng-yefied* (dignified), *heng-zh* (hinge), *seng-g* (sing).

m'n—as a syllable is often slurred: *hum'n* (human), *mom'nt* (moment), *sam'n* (salmon), *com'n* (common). Give special emphasis to “m.”

Try the effect of palatalized “b” and dentalized “t” in the following: the black smoke stung and brought tears to Hobb's eyes.

### Characteristic Phrases and Sentences

“De birdss yăstărday sengg sweetly.”

“I am sorry I not eble to geeve alms.

“Every night he asked my age.”

“Ăvery nahit he ěsked my âch.”

“To pre'pare thet ect took awrss and awrss” (hours).

### Table of Consonant Variations

All consonants in the Russian language have both a hard and a soft sound. This habit results in over palatization of many English consonants. Palatization brings the front of the tongue closer to the hard palate. It often creates the effect of a “j” glide, especially after consonants “p,” “b,” and “m” when used with front vowels. “t” and “d,” on the other hand, are dentalized.

p-b— These sounds are not aspirated after the plosive as in English. “p” and “b” are often interchanged, or palatalized: *opey* (obey), *oben* (open), *bjusy* (busy).

t-d— Dentalized with tip of tongue against upper teeth instead of teeth ridge: *substitute, didn't*.

- k-g— Frequently interchanged: *wigged* (wicked), *thig* (thick), *bikest* (biggest).
- l— Clear as in *simple*, *people*. Tip of tongue against upper teeth, back of tongue raised toward soft palate. Use more muscular effort of tongue.
- r— Roll made with tip of tongue against middle of teeth ridge. Similar to Scotch roll, but deeper.
- s-z— Clean-cut, sharp quality.
- th— Voiced and unvoiced has the same formation as the Russian “d” and “t,” tip of tongue against teeth.
- w— Formed without lip rounding. Sounds closer to v.

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. VOW.	I. P.	AS IN	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	āle	ɛɪ	ěll (ale), lědy (lady), fěnt (faint)
ā	e	vācate	ɛ·	vēcete (vacate), persuēde (persuade)
ǣ	æ	ǣdd	ɛ	ědd (add), fěct (fact), cěn (can)
ɑ	ə	ɑlong	ə	ɑlong
ā	a:	āsk	ɔ:	awsk, commānd, awnt (aunt), cawmrad (comrade)
ā	ɑ:	ālms	ɔ:	ālms, fāther, hāp, hāf, yārd
ǣ	ɔ:	ǣll	ɒ	ōll (all), ōful (awful)
ē	i:	sēē	ɪ	sī (see), tīr (tear), pīple (people)
ē	i·	ēvoke	ɪ	īvoke, īvent
ě	ɛ	elk	æ	ǣlk, fǣrry (ferry), tǣl (tell)
ī	ai	ice	aɪ	ice, fly, try, dry
ĩ	ɪ	it	i:	ēet, crēēple (cripple)
ō	oʊ	sō	ɔ:	saw (so), hām (home), smāk (smoke)
ō	o	ōbey	ɔ:	awbey, āver (over), nōn (known)
ō	ɔ	ōff	ɔ:	off, soft, cough
ō	ɒ	ōn	ɔ:	awn, nawr (nor), nawt (not), hawnor (honor)
ōō	ʊ	gōōd	u·	gōōd, should, put
ōō	u:	fōōd	u:	fōōd, shrewd, mood
ũ	ju:	ūsual	ju:	ūsual, unit
û	ɜ	hûrt	aɪ	hairt (hurt), wawrk (work)
ũ	ʌ	ũp	æ	ǣp (up), rǣgged (rugged)
ou	ɑʊ	out	ɔ:	ōt (out), nō (now)
oi	ɔɪ	oil	ɔɪ	oil, Tolstoy, royal

*General Practice Material*

Plays: *Reunion In Vienna*—Robert Sherwood

*Tovarich*—Jacques Duval

*Idiot's Delight*—Robert Sherwood

*The Boor*—Tchekoff

Monodramas: "Danse Finale"—Clay Franklin

(*You're The Show*)

## CHAPTER THIRTY-FIVE

### YIDDISH-ENGLISH DIALECT

THE ORIGIN of Yiddish is middle Europe, Poland and Russia. Yiddish is neither Hebrew, Russian, Polish, nor German—though it shows traces of them all, and these traces in turn help to create the dialect known as Yiddish-English.

This chapter represents the dialect at its broadest, since that is the type in greatest demand. The people who speak it are home-loving, religious, loyal, thrifty, and imbued with a strong desire to educate their children and establish them in life.

Note that Italian, Spanish, French, German, and English people of Jewish descent tend to speak the language of their adopted countries; thus their speech is a consideration apart from Yiddish. In the Middle Ages the Jews who resided in Germany were invited to settle in Poland and form a middle class of merchants; many of them did, subsequently moving on to Russia in numbers. In time their Low German speech became mixed with various Slav tongues and resulted in Yiddish.

#### *Rhythm*

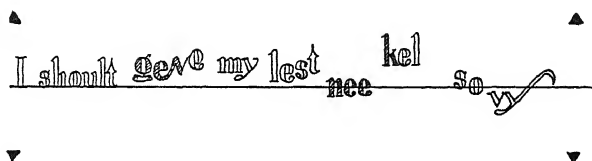
The moderate pace of factual speech is capable of much acceleration under emotional stress. In many instances rhythm is peculiarly marked: it proceeds, as it were, in anapests. There will be two, sometimes three, unaccented syllables followed by an accented syllable of rising inflection. The effect is sing-songy. Speak aloud: *I dun't knuh* (know), *mebbe su* (so). Move to a peak of inflectional prominence on *knuh* and *su*.

#### *Stress*

The wealth of emotion often loosened in Yiddish accounts for the stress created through the diphthongization of English vowels that should be pronounced as monothongs. Sentence beginnings and endings are usually stressed.

*Intonation*

Dominant pitch may be either high or low. The general inflection is upward, accompanied with much glide value. The range is wide. Pitch may ascend abruptly or in rising curves. There is a tendency in Yiddish speech to answer one question by asking another, thus: *Deed you pay de meelkmen? Nu, I should geeve my lest neekle to heem?*

*Timbre*

The sing-song effect of Yiddish is more richly secured if it is spoken with a hint of nasality. There is a throb, an insistent intensity and emotional quality in both masculine and feminine utterance

*Syntax*

Subject and predicate are frequently confused. Thus, *Vun meenut, de door iss knockingk. Mmm, vit de hadag am I suffringk!*

The *ing* participle is often used for present and past tense verbs, thus: *So y' verkingk by Macy's? Should be y' savingk munyi by carfare* (You should be saving carefare).

The following are frequently used as intensifiers: *yet, nu, so, now, by, should, they, it, once, with*. Thus: *Geev to heem yat anoder piece—Nu vy y' gu so soon?—How's by you?—Shouldn' be I shouldn' gat vell from de dietingk—Geeves eet a fonny small, de feesh?—So you minningk for vonce y' admeet y' rongk? So you admit for once you are wrong?—He tuk de hopples vit de lemons vit de bogz* (He took the apples, lemons and box).

*Pronunciation*

There is a deceptive similarity between German and Yiddish dialects, especially in consonantal pronunciations. Yiddish dentalization is lighter, however. In vowel pronunciations there is great difference.

ă, ě—often interchanged thus: *hěnd* (hand) *hăd* (head) *ěsk* (ask) *ěvenue* (avenue) *ăver* (ever).

ǟ—sound this as “ǔ”: *ǎll* (all) *ǎful* (awful) *lǎ* (law).

ĩ—often lengthened and highly inflected: *aee* (I) *nàēēght* (night).

ĩ, ē—often interchanged: *eef* (if) *hit* (heat) *seet* (sit). Exceptions: *it*, *kid*, *bill*, *bid*, *vit* (with).

ō—sound it as very short “ǔ”: *sǎfa* (sofa) *sǔ* (so) *ǎpen* (open) *dǎp* (dope).

ō—sound as lengthened “ǔ”: *ǎn* (on) *nǎt* (not) *lǎng* (long).

ũ—sound it with an initial “y” but with no lip rounding: *yōōzhōōl* (usual) *myōōsec* (music).

u—not retained in its legitimate place, sounded as “o”: *op* (up) *soch* (such) *rosh* (rush).

ou—also sounded as “o” lengthened: *ot* (out) *fond* (found) *arond* (around).

### *Assimilation*

Particularly characteristic touches are shown in word endings such as:

ing—which either sounds the hard “g” or adds “k”: *going-g*, *comingk*, *Long-gIsland*.

tl—in which “t” and “l” are assimilated, giving the effect of *bo’le* or *bot-ul* (bottle) *sut-ul* (subtle) *tot-ul* (total).

Words are often linked with a slurred effect created by lengthened sounds and intonation, thus: *Nu, I should’ntogat icecrim?* (So I shouldn’t have ice cream?).

### *Characteristic Phrases and Sentences*

Valkingk meks de fit so dey boin.

Walking makes the feet burn.

Ye vant I sh’d gu vit you by de movies?

Ven I say go—go.

Nu, y’ got t’esk me?

*Table of Consonant Variations*

- d— substituted for voiced “th”; especially noticeable in the middle of words: *mudder* (mother), *fadder* (father).
- c— often substituted for final “g”; *bucks* (bugs), *recks* (rags), *beek* (big).
- f— substituted for “v”; *fiye* (five), *afery* (every).
- g— Always sounded gutturally. At word endings it is given the hard “g” sound: *long-g* (long), *sing-g* (sing). Note that the first “g” is assimilated and a final, hard “g” is added.  
Many times a “k” sound is added thus: *going-k*, *stopping-k*.
- h— Often introduced before an initial vowel: *honions*, *huffle* (awful), *hokistra* (orchestra).
- s— At times it is extremely sibilant: *pess* (pass), *leesson* (listen), *Ssem* (Sam).  
When “s” normally takes a “z” sound it is intensified thus: *guzz* (goes), *gruzz* (grows).
- r— Is never sounded in the *bird-earth-world* group; but the preceding vowel sound is often diphthongized thus: *boid-oith-would*.  
— When no consonant follows “r” in this group the “r” is still not sounded, but the preceding vowel is changed thus; *hě*, *fě*, *sě*, *wě*, are substituted for *her*, *fur*, *sir*, *were*.  
— As a rule one should use the trilled “r” sound.  
— Many times “r” is dropped entirely: *o’de* (order), *dai* (dare), *cleah* (clear).  
— When “r” begins a word it is always sounded. Give it a throaty tone and introduce it with the briefest of vowel sounds: *u-rat* (red), *u-reach* (reach).
- t— Is sometimes substituted for “d” at word endings: *fat* (fed), *hat* (head), *rut* (rode).  
It is always substituted for unvoiced “th” thus: *tenk* (thank), *teengk* (think), *teen* (thin).
- th— Is never sounded. Substitute “t” for unvoiced sound (as indicated above); substitute “d” for voiced sound: *dees* (this), *dem* (them), *dose* (those).
- v— Is substituted for “w” thus: *vit* (with), *qveek* (quick), *squiz* (squeeze).

## TABLE OF VOWEL VARIATIONS

ENG. Vow.	I. P.	As IN	I.P. SUB.	SUBSTITUTE OR EQUIVALENT VOWELS (Sound-Spelled When Helpful)
ā	ei	āle	ei	āle, dāy, māke, sāme
ă	e	văcate	e	văcate, chaotic
ă	æ	ădd	ε	ědd, hěd (had), ěnd, běd (bad), hět (hat)
α	o	along	Λ	ŭlong, ŭmong
â	a	âsk	ε	ěsk, těsk, bět (bath)
á	α:	alms	ɒ	ŏms (alms), fŏdeh (father)
a	o:	all	Λ	ŭll, cŭll, cŭt (caught), lŭ (law)
ē	i:	sēē	ɪ	sĭ, plĭzz, sĭz (seize), stĭll, (steal)
ê	i·	êvoke	ɪ	ĭvuk (evoke), ĭveningk (evening)
ě	ε	ělk	æ	ălk, ăxcuse, yăt, hălp
ī	ai	īce	a:i:	īce, spy, tīme
ĭ	ɪ	ĭt	i:	ĭt, bēēzy, gēēve, sēēng, mēēnut
ō	oʊ	sō	Λ	sŭ, gŭ, dŭp (dope), clŭs (close)
ô	o	ôbey	Λ	ŭbey, tŭbeccu (tobacco)
ŏ	o	ŏff	Λ	ŭff, cŭff (cough), sŭft
ö	ɒ	ön	Λ	ŭn, nŭt, lŭngk (long), strŭngk
ö	ʊ	gööd	ʊ	gŏöt, fŏöt, pŏöt
ō	u:	fōod	u:	fŏod, lose, rude, soon
ŭ	ju	ŭsual	jʊ	yŏös-ual, vyoo (view), cyoo (cue)
û	ɜ	hûrt	ɔɪ	hoit, doit, coitan (curtain)
ŭ	Λ	ŭp	ɒ	ŏp, sŏch, jŏmp, rŏn, rŏsh (rush)
ou	αʊ	out	ɒ	ŏt, rŏn' (round), stŏt (stout)
oi	ɔɪ	oil	ɔɪ	oel, royal, soel

*General Practice Material*

Plays: *The Jazz Singer*—Samson Raphaelson

*The Florist Shop* (one act)—Winifred Hawkrigde

*We Americans*—M. H. Gropper and M. Siegel

Stories: *Little Citizens*—Myra Kelly

Monodramas: "Light and Shadow" (*These Mortals among Us*)—  
Clay Franklin

"The Communist" (*Phonetic Studies in Folk Speech  
and Broken English*)—Anne Darrow

"The Jewish Picnic"—C. B. Hall (*Easy Entertaining  
Monologues*; Fitzgerald)

## CHAPTER THIRTY-SIX

### MORE FOREIGN DIALECTS

Swedish, Norwegian, Greek, Chinese, Japanese

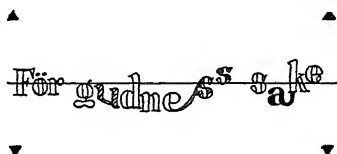
#### SWEDISH AND NORWEGIAN

THESE SCANDINAVIAN peoples have many similar elements in their English speech, although their native languages and dialects are different. The sounds used are much the same. The greatest differences are to be heard in general intensity. Norwegian-English is characterized by greater force and abruptness. This speech has more umlauts; it is deeper and more abrupt rhythmically, with sharper intonational peaks, than is Swedish.

The general Swedish tone is softer and has more glides and lilt in the intonation.

The peasant speech of both countries is full of sing-songy ups and downs and short glides of limited pitch range. Most comedy poems and character parts in plays call for the peasant type of utterance and this has, perhaps, created a type of caricatured Scandinavian that is far from accurate. For example, the lines *Aye vant to go hame* have been much exaggerated in America.

Cultured speech is not so sing-songy but it must be characterized by the downward-upward lilt. The following suggests characteristic intonations:



Notice the down-up swing accenting and lengthening the vowels. The Swedish vowels are especially long and open, very much like German vowels but different in intonation. Norwegian pitch is generally lower and not as wide in range.

Methods of connecting words can do much to suggest the dialects. Think of Swedish especially as a language of vowels very much as is the Italian. Say *outofvit* (out of it) gliding softly from vowel to vowel, then sharpen the attack and the breath escape between words. Such practice gives a sense of difference between the Swedish and Norwegian English. Try the same with *all dhesspeople* (all these people) and *interestedtosee* (interesting to see); dentalize "t" and "d."

The oft used *aye* for *I* is due to the Swedish word for *I*, *jeg*, pronounced *yāy*.

y—is a very outstanding sound used for all "j" words: *yust* (just), *yob* (job), *Yimmy* (Jimmy).

ö-ü—umlauts are employed in such words as *för*, *gud* (good), *abòt* (about), *tòrst* (thirst), *skùll* (school), *mòrder* (murder), *dör* (door). (Norwegians use more of the umlaut "ö," Swedish more for "ü.")

Other variations in vowel sounds:

The "o" has more variations than any other vowel. It is never exactly like the English sound. Aside from the ö (umlaut).

ö—is often used in "ä," "ä," or "ü" words: *öll* (all), *ösk* (ask), *söng*, *röt* (rat), *öþ* (up).

ō—is a monothong without an "ö" vanish. Sometimes the lilt will create the effect of "öü"; *göül* (✓), or the lilting pronunciation of *böök* may sound like *bō-ōk* (✓).

ō—is used for some "ö" and "ü" words: *dōctor* (doctor), *skoolor* (scholar), *ōnder* (under), *rōm*.

ō—is often used for *brother*; the Swedish word *broder* is pronounced *brōder*. *Word* is *vōrd* or *vōrd*.

ā—Their long "a" is more like the French monothong "é."

ä-ě—often interchanged: *man* (men), *het* (hat), *epple* (apple), *lemp* (lamp). Use a deep "ě" sound. "ä" sound is used for *värk* (work), *märk*, *lärk*.

ē—the sound is generally between deep "ě" and "ī." Try it in *Svede*, *treat*, *eat*, *knee*, *Norwegian*.

Added consonant variations:

r—vibrated with tip of tongue (rolled or trilled): *crazy*, *riding*, *street*, *turst* (thirst).

t-d—formed with tongue against cutting edge of upper teeth.

*street*. Also used for "th": *tink* (think), *throw* (throw), *dhat* (that), *dhose* (those).

l—very liquid.

s—very sibilant: *iss* (is), *mussic* (music), never "z" sound.

ng—always like *singer*, not *finger*: *resingation* (resignation).

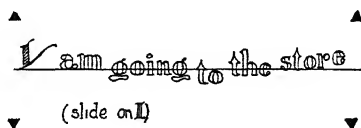
w—sounded as "v": *Svedes* and *Norvegians*.

#### GREEK-ENGLISH DIALECT

The speaking of Greek-English is largely modified by a breathing habit which affects both the rhythm and the timbre of the speech. Greek, as a language, calls for both "smooth breathing" (*spiritus lenis*), and "rough breathing" (*spiritus asper*). This "rough" breath is greatly aspirated and is used distinctively by the Greeks. For example, in uttering *How are you?* the "h" should be sounded as a sort of coughed "hech" sound. This "h" is further characterized by a guttural attack and an elaborate use of the jaw and lips. Greek speech abounds in gutturals followed by aspirates.

The rhythm is fast and is apt to sound jerky. This latter effect is mentioned by K. Petraris, who says: "Words are separated by stoppage of breath so that word finals and initials do not modify each other in the sentence."\*

Pitch range is very wide. Emotional stress brings emphasis to both the intonational range and general aspiration. The speech tune often suggests a lift on the first word. Thus:



Greek tone tends toward the oratorical. It is emphatic, loud, and deep.

Consonant sounds offer more distinct variations than do the vowels. Vowels are invariably lengthened and deepened. Long "ō" is used in preference to short "ö"; and "ä" rather than "ä."

#### *Consonant Variations*

ch—This has either a guttural or a palatal sound. Its guttural sound is similar to the German *nacht*. It is used when "ch" fol-

\* K. Petraris, *Handbook of the Modern Greek*, Chapter I. Heidelberg, 1921.

lows a consonant or "a," "o," "u." Thus, *technique*, *chrōnic*, *Michael*.

The palatal (as in Scots *loch*) is used when followed by "i" or "e" in Greek words, but is not so often carried into English; *machine* is pronounced with a soft "sh" sound, *teacher* as *teatser*.

g—very often sounded as guttural followed by aspirate: *stigma* (stigma), *signal* (signal).

j-dg—the harsh "j" sound is softened more like "zh" or "dz": *zhudze* (judge), *zhust* (just), *grādzuate* (graduate), *ōranzh* (orange).

l—very liquid, clear: *lull*, *like*, *fill*, *apple*.

ng—sounded as "ng" in *single*: *singer*, soft "ng" followed by the Greek "h" may be heard in *melang-hōly* (melancholy).

k—has a guttural sound before "a," "o," "u": *can*, *coal*, *cuff*. Sounded as "k" in *king* before "e" and "i": *kept*, *kill*.

r—trilled with the tip of tongue (not guttural).

s—breathed sharp sibilant "ss": *hiss* (his), *ass* (as).

z—sounded in "z" spellings *cōzmos* (cosmos)—a Greek word.

wh—aspirated "ooh"; *ōōhy* (why), *ōōhen* (when).

#### CHINESE AND JAPANESE

The Chinaman's methods of employing the intonational and rhythmic elements of English create the most distinctive features of this dialect. Thus, (1) the dominant pitch is relatively high and in a minor tone; there is quite a sustained monotonic effect. Furthermore, (2) each syllable is a word (in Chinese) with its own accent; so that English words of more than one syllable are spoken with even measure: *to-day*, *win-dow*. Finally, (3) the range of intonation reveals but four or five tones.

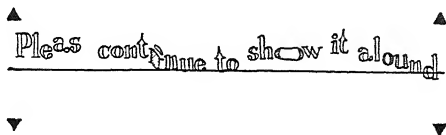
The Chinese musical scale is practically pentatonic; Baltzell \* records the five tones as F, G, A, C, D. The Chinaman employs these tones in varying octaves when speaking Chinese. But when he speaks English he uses these tones in only one octave—and his starting tone is usually the F above middle C.

#### *Securing Chinese Inflection*

The inflection heard in Chinese-English is based on four tonal patterns. These are: (1) an even, flat tone, (2) a slightly rising tone, (3) a falling-rising tone, (4) a falling tone. These inflectional

\* W. J. Baltzell, *History of Music*, Theodore Presser, Phila., 1908.

patterns can be reproduced with valuable effect, especially when brief Chinese-English sentences are uttered. Thus, *stop*, can be spoken in four inflections: flat, rising, falling-rising, falling. Try this:



Pronunciation is often indistinct due to very limited lip and jaw movement. The quality is nasal, due to the general use of the tongue with the back lowered in flattened position. Keep the lips in a broad smiling position.

American methods of assimilation are quite difficult. Note these variations:

r—formed with back of tongue flat. This, of course, produces a sound like “l”: *tomorrow* (tomorrow).

j—is sounded as “zh”: *zhob* (job), *Zhanuary* (January).

v—substitute for this sound “f” or “w” but do not protrude the lips: *elefen* (eleven), *ewening* (evening), *fife* (five).

x—sounded as “k”: *sik* (six) *sikteen* (sixteen).

z—sounded as “s”: *hiss* (his) *Tuessday* (Tuesday).

Sound the aspirate “h” and “sh” with distinctness: *hole*, *shall*, *heap*, *ship*, *hose*, etc.

Do not release aspiration in these consonantal sounds: “p, t, k, ts, ch, b, d, g, zs,” particularly not at the end of words: *cen’* (cent) *roa’* (road) *si’* (sip) *ta’* (take). Obviously this cannot be overdone if one wants to be understood by an audience. Treat this assimilative shortcoming gingerly.

Nasal and guttural sounds are frequently heard throughout this dialect and an initial glottal catch is often used, particularly with “j, h, sh,” also with initial vowels.

Vowels are short in duration and rarely are diphthongized.

### *Comparison of Chinese-Japanese*

An interesting light upon Chinese-Japanese speech differences is cast by the following comments offered by an American of long residence in the Orient, Mr. “Ted” Jewett, radio actor. The observations are reprinted verbatim.

Confusion between the Japanese and Chinese dialects may be traced to the similarity in appearance of the two peoples, their Oriental common denominator, and the fact that many of the characters used in writing are common to both nationalities.

The two languages, however, are as different as can be. There is practically *no* similarity.

The basic difference is that Chinese is a tongue in which the sound of the letter "R" never occurs. Consequently no Chinaman can make the sound except by diligent study with a foreign teacher. The Japanese's language does not contain the sound of "L", and so he is faced with the same difficulty in using that letter or its equivalent sound.

Further differences are found in the production of words. The Chinese *sing* their words in throat and chest, leaving the back part of the tongue lowered as when we say "Ah-h-h" for the family doctor. The speech is *intoned* almost like a chant.

The Japanese, on the other hand, places his words in the forward part of the mouth, using great sibilance, an energetic, uplifted tongue, and a staccato delivery. The sibilance achieved by speaking through partly closed teeth is a favorite Japanese way of expressing mild delight or light annoyance. A polite Japanese greeting is often a soft, sibilant inhalation with teeth almost shut, no actual word being spoken!

Now to illustrate these differences, let us practice typical English sentences, repeating them as they would be distorted by Japanese or Chinese:

- (1) (ENGLISH) "I trust long rest has relieved you."
- (2) (CHINESE) "I t(l)ust long (l)est has (l)elieved you."
- (3) (JAPANESE) "I trust (r)ong rest has re(r)ieved you."

To say No. 2, lay the tongue flat down on the bottom of the mouth, and *don't raise it* throughout the whole sentence. The letters in parenthesis indicate the substitute sounds which, for lack of training in the original sounds the Chinaman would employ. Leave the nasal passages unimpeded, so that full singing resonance may be used. *Never* dwell upon these substitute sounds. Accentuating them gives an impression of burlesque or ridicule, not an impression of accurate impersonation. Better leave out *any* sound when the difficult letters occur than make them obvious. After all, remember that not all Chinese operate laundries.

To speak No. 3, keep the mouth about half shut, and, for practice, never allow the edges of your tongue along the sides to separate from your upper teeth. This will restrict the "resonance chamber" to the forward part of the mouth alone, and force the words to be highly inflected by lips and the tip of the tongue. Try *whispering* a sentence, and notice how energetically you use lips and tongue. Now allow the vocal chords to supply *just a little* actual tone.

In closing, I might caution against the erroneous idea, seemingly widespread, that to imitate a Chinaman one must give forth harsh, metallic, rasping noises made by tightening the throat. Instead, *sing* with as round and pleasant tone as you can. In like fashion, remember that to impersonate a Japanese it adds not one iota to rattle on with terrific speed. Japanese is *staccato*, but not necessarily *fast*.

*General Practice Material*1. *Swedish*

Plays: *Anna Christie*—Eugene O'Neill  
*White Desert*—Maxwell Anderson  
*Double Trouble*—James Reach

2. *Chinese*

Plays: *Lady Precious Stream*—S. Hsiang  
*Shanghai Gesture*—John Colton  
*Yellow Jacket*—Benrimo and Hazelton  
*Chinese Love*—Clare Hummer

3. *Japanese*

Plays: *The Willow Tree*—Benrimo and Rhodes  
*Madame Butterfly*—John Luther Long and Belasco



## MONODRAMAS



## PRODIGY

(Shrewdly placed lamps filter soft radiance about the room into which Ethel Sibsby has been directed. The attendant murmurs a low-voiced introduction to Dr. Lundy and departs. For a moment Ethel stands uncertainly, an incongruous figure in good quality clothes of bad color scheme and assortment. Then, with a rush, her words pelt the ears of the psychiatrist to whom she has come for aid.)

Mrs. Winters recommended I come to you, Dr. Lundy. She said you helped her when her little Bobby passed away and her mind was—I am Ethel Sibsby. (*Sitting.*) Doctor! I'm subtly going mad! I'm lost, I think, lost!

. . . I'm—I'm over twenty-nine . . . Well, if you must ask—thirty-seven. And this strangling, desperate fear has been growing for years—perhaps fifteen years!

. . . Form? Its form is malignant, doctor—sinister! And strange! Life, I feel, is closing in on me. I feel thwarted, baffled! Oh I can give you fifty examples of the form my despondency takes. But I do not know what is the cause. That is what you must tell me.

. . . No, I do not eat well and I sleep poorly. I have horrid dreams, too. And I'm growing—well, some days I even dread going outdoors. The effort of meeting and talking to people!

. . . Of course I realize it's a neurosis. Sometimes, as now, I even feel on the verge of discovering the key to it all. But why should a neurosis visit me! I who have had so much from life!

. . . I have had much from life. I was a child prodigy, doctor. (*Pride touches up her features during this recital.*)

. . . Oh yes, I was petted and humored I suppose—as no doubt all child prodigies are . . . Oh, my talent was not confined to *one* field. I could write stories and poetry, play an instrument, sing—which I never do now—and sculpture . . . I— Let me see— I was about seven when my aptitudes began to manifest themselves.

. . . You are quite right, it was Mother who discovered and nurtured my talent . . . No, perhaps I was quite high-strung, but I didn't feel myself essentially different from my brothers and

sisters. *They* had no talents—save for being normal, ordinary people.

Doctor! Why do you look at me like that? Have I said something? I only said——

*(Suddenly the "key" occurs to her in a blinding idea.)*

Oh! Doctor! That is a clue, isn't it! *A talent for being ordinary people! Normal, ordinary people!*

*(She leaps to her feet, begins striding.)*

Doctor! I think I have it! Do you know what's wrong with me? Do you know what it is like to be gifted in early life? I do!

"Ethel dear, you played that beautifully. Child, you're unbelievable. Oh, yes, my daughter is quite amazing. Ethel, you can't spend so much time playing house; you must get to your practicing. Ethel, this afternoon we must go to Chaliapin's recital. You must become acquainted with all the artists of our time so that you can take your place among them with ease when your great day arrives."

Doctor Lundy, the flattery of those days!

I went from one childish triumph to another, singing, piano playing, sculpting, writing. When I was seventeen I spoke five languages, had seen every artist of prominence in the world and could discuss all artistic theory and practice. That year I entered a prize contest.

Perhaps I was over-confident. I failed. That meant nothing of course. I entered a literary contest. Failure again. Mama bit her lip, all my friends mortified me with their sympathy.

Ah, Doctor, this confession is good! Do you begin to understand my case?

Well, I had my first experience with love. I was twenty and my second failure was well behind me. It became a matter of choosing marriage or a career. I chose the career. I had to. My egotism, the memory of my defeats would not let me do otherwise.

I was on my mettle then; the die was cast. Oh, I worked, worked hard to make good. But nothing—Mother, my friends, myself, we couldn't understand why everything failed. But I see now! You see, Doctor, I never asked myself "How good can I make this piece of work?" Rather, my attitude was "I'll show them with this!" I was a miserably egotistic artist, working for personal glorification, anxious only to quickly gain recognition. Oh, God! how could I have been satisfied to perform such flashy, brittle work—instead of good, solid, sincere things! And now it's too late!

. . . What, Doctor? Nonsense? Oh, no, it is too late, believe me.

You see, love . . . came . . . to . . . me . . . again. Only yesterday I had another chance, I saw a proposal in his eyes. But I was too frightened to give him an opening, and now he's gone away—gone where I cannot possibly reach him. He's gone, doctor, gone!

. . . Oh, yes, I know it's too late.

*(Snapping open her bag, she extracts a bill and tosses it on the desk.)*

Thank you, Doctor. In some inscrutable fashion you've stimulated me to exercise the secret devil that has been at my throat for so long! No, no, I'm able to get to the door without assistance. Goodbye. Oh—Doctor— Pardon me, I'll have control in a moment. What do you think of this for a headstone inscription: POOR GIRL—SHE WAS A "CHILD PRODIGY."

## HOW TO WIN FRIENDS

(Outside the office of the Greenpoint Publishing Company Larry Whitney pauses. Although seeking his first job he betrays no nervousness but only confidence. In fact, see the admirable lift to his chest and swing to his walk as he opens the anteroom door. This dynamic attitude is explained by the book which he hugs under his arm: *Powerful Personalities or How to Win Friends*. Briskly he steps toward the clerk.)

Good morning Miss, I'm Larry Whitney, here to see Mr. Haverstraw . . . Oh, yes, I have an appointment all right. He's probably waiting on pins and needles to hire me. Oh, but Miss—!

First, may I tell you? Your dress—a miracle of business taste. Just exquisitely bridging the gap between the business note and sex appeal. And your manner—! Superb! Professional, yet with just the hint of warmth that a visitor finds——

I beg your pardon? Me? Why, why of course I'm no salesman. No, no, just announce me.

*(He follows the clerk over to where Mr. Haverstraw is seated. His hand flies out cordially.)*

Hel-lo Mr. Haverstraw! Haverstraw old man I'm ter-rifically glad to meet you; this is a proud moment! Larry Whitney, sir, just out of Gunnysack College—you remember good old Gunny-

sack? I'm here to see you about a job. Oh, but enough of me. I simply must felicitate the publisher who gave us that smash hit *Dorothy Diddie in a Dither* and also *Did Danny do Delia Dirt?* Havvy, you've got something!

And this is your office! Let me compliment you on the delicate tone texture of this marvelous antique wall finish. How did you ever bully a decorator into producing such a shade? . . Eh? No! My, my—ten years accumulation of dirt.

Thanks loads for giving me this appointment. Frankly I've worked hard in college to fit myself for this opportunity . . . Why—a job in your office . . . Nobody told me I was to work here. That is nobody but my new-found philosophy. It says ASSUME A FACT IS SO. IT IS THEN ALREADY HALF TRUE! Catch?

But, tut, tut; enough of me. Confidentially, I bet all the applicants for jobs violate rule number one of Powerful Personalities—see?—by talking about themselves. How silly! How can I, with life still ahead of me, hope to have a word to say which is comparable with the magnificent bloom of experienced observation nurtured into mature fruition by a man like yourself!

Mr. Haverstraw, pardon my mentioning this, but I simply must comment on that gorgeous tie you're wearing! So vivid, so dynamic, so full of verve . . . Oh, a Christmas present? Ha, ha, ha. Permit me to remark on your tidy desk, itself a mark of the capable executive——

*(Mr. Haverstraw's patience is worn thin.)*

Sir? Interview over! Am I sane? Why sir! . . Well, my manner may not be that of the average man applying for a job; but he doesn't know about Powerful Personalities! Now you take . . .

But Mr. Haverstraw, you're not being fair. You're not acting as the book says you should. Oh, Mr. Haverstraw, there are still so many things to say—so many singular points of personality observable about you that I haven't spoken of yet and . . .

Oh, that— Well, I suppose my fitness for a position is the concrete point of discussion, but—why talk about me? How much better to approach the discussion in a less tiresome, more original way—so that your ego, Mr. Haverstraw, will have opportunity to flower in the radiant sun of a comradely exchange! Now if you'll just . . .

Busy? Now Mr. Haverstraw, not quibbling? . . . Oh . . . I see.

Very well, then, I'll come back another time. I, I'm sorry if I have disturbed you. I, well—good-day Mr. Haverstraw—and you do have a remarkably fine haircut there!

## MAGISTRATE'S COURT

(Marie Waters stands in Court pleading for the release of her husband, Frank. The Magistrate and a social worker want Marie to charge him so that he can be sent away and taught a lesson. Marie is of splendid body.)

Aw, let him be, y'r honor. Frank takes a nip but he ain't a bad guy. Besides I'm his wife, what kind of a turnip does that make me if I have him sent to jail because he makes a pass at me? Sendin' him to jail won't help. The way things go now, he socks me and I sock back. But if you send him—Jeeze, y'r honor, don't you know the difference between a well-meanin' guy that beats a wife for the devil of it and a guy that beats her because he's just mean?

*(Marie turns to the social worker.)*

And you, social worker. Y' come slippin' aroun' tryin' to win a person's confidence and lettin' on that all y' wanta do is the right thing. All y' wanta do is what *you* think is the right thing! . . . Yeah? Listen, lady, think I can't guess that yer tryin' t' git hizzoner to send Frank to Jail? Women like you, that's too dried up to git a man of your own—what'dye wanta come around messin' other people's lives fer?

. . . Well, there's a few things you can pick up too!

Look at that hulk over there! You look, too, y'r honor. Frank—me husband! Yeah and I'm proud of 'im. He's *mine*. Handsome, ain't he, with three days' whiskers on 'im; and them tired lines around his eyes; and the way he twitches in his sleep. Hard to see what I see in him? I get it. Y'r thinkin' that a big bloated loafer is a millstone around me neck. That, because I got some looks, I'd do better without 'im. Well, listen!

People that's down an' out all look alike. Y' gotta be wearin' good clothes before people c'n put the right label on you—don't y' know that?

Y' can't see Frank on his feet, can yuh? You can't see that baby standin' proud to the height of his six feet—with a swell chest and

a smile from ear to ear! With pearly white teeth and baby-clear eyes! But that's the guy I married—and it's the guy he'll be again!

An' you people think that the way t' help him is to send him to jail! Go on, do it! Let him know that him what was a good art metal worker has got his finger-prints took and is no better than a crook! He drinks now because the guy's discouraged. Give 'im a better reason—send 'im to jail!

. . . Aw, how do I know what's a good way to help 'im? All I know is that here's a guy which if he'd been born in my grandpa's time would a gone out and chopped him down some trees and made a new home for us when things got tough like they are now. Why if Frank just goes t' th' park, the smell o' fresh air near sets him crazy!

An' here's me, wantin' to help Frank raise kids. . . . Yeah? Well, I ain't no reliefer. I ain't bringin' babies inta th' world an' lettin' the gov-mint support 'em like we was—was . . . Aw, I dunno why I'm talkin' so much anyway. Y'r honor, I'm takin' Frank outa here. All right? . . .

An' you, lady— It's gittin' to be a tough life fer people like me and Frank—what ain't got a lotta education. I think about it. I think how terrible complicated life's gittin' to be. Think about it yerself. Think how, when a war's on, its people like my Frank that gits grabbed first. We made this country—his people and mine. We may be careless about gittin' educated, but we got what it took to make this country inta somethin'. If you want somethin' to think about, start figurin' what'll happen if we start to make it over a second time. In the meantime Frank an' me'll start figurin' how we c'n live off the gov-mint and not lose our self-respect and git to feelin' like, like . . .

*(Words fail. She snaps a frustrated gesture, trudges out.)*

## TEA TIME TABLEAUX

(Park Avenue . . . the well-bred hum of well-fed tea-guests. Late—as his bland technique dictates—Tracy Tarnleigh, tea-hound, pauses in the doorway. Seeing his hostess, he makes his way to her, his weak handsome features working enthusiastically. Of course he is dressed in impressive impeccability.)

How *do* you do Mrs. Swiftsweet, so sorry to be late at your charming tea. . . . Thank you. So sorry, too, that I couldn't come last week. I was—ah—forced to let myself be tied up by a producer. The chap is planning a dramatic vehicle, wanted my opinion as to whether the play needed re-writing . . . Pardon? Of course. Plays always do—as we actors can tell you. The trouble with the theatre today is three dollar tickets versus ten cent store plays. But there I go—Off on my favorite subject. I'll push off. Mmm. I see lots of familiar faces.

*(Moving on, he mentally selects which target to aim at. On making a choice his expression becomes warmly cordial, his voice honeyed.)*

How-do-you-do. Have we met before at Mrs. Swiftsweet's teas? . . . I was sure we hadn't. You women of quiet modesty always make an impression on me and I'm sure I would remem— Permit me, I'm Tracy Tarnleigh. Oh, before you ask the question—It is not a stage name . . . You are Alma Predoux? Your name has dramatic savour.

. . . Your question, Miss Predoux, suggests you have not seen me on the stage. Yes, I'm an actor. I'm dashed that you haven't seen me on the boards; but I'm determined to rally. Perhaps you noticed I came straight to you after leaving our hostess? From across the room I caught the impression that you and I might become— Well, who knows?

*(He frowns on catching sight of another.)*

Would you excuse me? . . . Thank you. I see Gertrude Wellsley over there and I must speak to her . . . You've seen *her* on the stage? You've seen an insufferable person. We differ on almost everything, but—after all—she is one of the profession. And you know the loyalty we actors have for one another.

*(Cordial is his approach to Miss Wellsley.)*

Oh, Miss Wellsley—hello. Sorry to read that your show closed

. . . Oh, another play? When is he casting; when do rehearsals start; think there might be a chance for me?

. . . Do you need all that scorn in your voice when you say no? You might remember I've been in as many Broadway shows as you have . . . That may be; maybe I haven't had so many fat parts . . . Well what if I have only played bits!

See here, I had a feeling that you'd insult me but I thought I should be big enough to take that chance. I left a very charming girl to come over here and make peace with you and . . . Dried up looking! Well, if she is dried up looking, that's no cue for you to say so! . . . That's not true! I have no ulterior motive with her!

See here Gertrude— Miss Wellsley then. Please don't interest yourself in my affairs. And if I touch up my acting experience somewhat—well, don't do on me what you did at the last tea . . . You remember very well what you did. You told people that in my last play, *All Cats Are Gray*, I was the off-stage noise!

*(Bowing stiffly, he rejoins Miss Predoux.)*

Did you think I wasn't returning, Miss Predoux? . . . Nonsense—desert you for her? Oh no, though I'm awfully fond of Gertrude Wellsley—and I left her in a most delightful mood.

You're interested in the stage? . . . Ever done any acting? . . . But you do suggest slumberous fire—even Miss Wellsley thought so. . . . My plays? Oh, a number of hits. Did you see *All Cats Are Gray*? No? Ah, there was a vehicle! My part in that made unusual demands on my voice!

. . . Well I prefer parts of heroic fire. Cyrano de Bergerac. Remember the kiss speech? It goes—Shall we move to the corner? I see Gertrude Wellsley edging over. She's forever trying to pick up technical points from me, and one gets bored with too much of that, you know. Now . . .

*(Safely removed from threatening exposé, he begins.)*

"And what is a kiss, when all is done? A promise given under seal—a vow taken before the shrine of memory—a secret whispered to listening lips apart. A moment made immortal, with a rush of wings unseen— A sacrament of blossoms, a new song sung by two hearts to an old simple tune— The ring of one horizon around two souls together, all alone!"

You liked that? . . . Thank you, thank you. Of course such poetry calls for atmosphere—and it is so noisy here! Perhaps we

might—? You agree? I'd like to take you somewhere and really *explore* some dramatic bits with you—show a corner of my soul to you while—

*(The moment has arrived. Our "ham" actor is reaching the climax of his best type of performance.)*

Oh, I say! I just remembered! My wallet—I left it in another suit. It embarrasses me terribly, but do you perhaps have a— a twenty that would cover our taxi and incidentals? . . . So sweet of you. So embarrassing to ask about. Oh, one minute. Would you mind holding it until Miss Wellsley turns her back?

### CANZONET

(Sportive breezes play about the provocative figure in absurd beach costume and across the sands approaches a Cavalier with hair romantically grayed at the temples. At sight of him the girl is thrown into momentary confusion; recovering, she calls to her young charge playing nearby. Naïve is the way she pretends not to see the Cavalier, stoops to adjust the child's dress.)

Helene, ma petite, w'ile Ma-rie talks weez zees man you weel not stray too clos' to zee beeg sea wa-tair no? You ondair-stand? Zen fly away. An' do not get too dir-tee. Shoo!

*(The Cavalier offers greeting.)*

Good mor-neeng to you, too, M'sieur Carvair. An' now zat I exshange courtesee weez you, please to go away. No, no, M'sieur—do not geeve to me zee fla-sheeng debonair smile nor again zee anvetasyon to go stroll by zee rocks. I do not forget w'at 'appen zair yes-tair-day. Eet ees w'y I am an-gry wees you—an' ash'am'.

M'sieur, believe zees—I am a good girl! No man evair kees me onteel you do eet yestairday!

. . . Well, I know zat. Of course a girl mus' be keesed a firs' time some-time. But because eet mus' 'appen some-time ees all ze more rea-zon to protes' w'en eet does! Som'seeng precyous goes weez a girl's firs' kees, M'sieur—you know? An' so we mus' to say goodbye, M'sieur Carvair of ze da-sheeng gray 'air. . . . Because, aside from zees kees, I am ash'am' for ozair rea-zons.

. . . I, I lie to you. I am not ze gover-ness of leetle Helene who plays ovair zair. She ees my niece. We leeve een zat Villa back zair. I tell you I am gover-ness to ancourage you to speak weez me.

. . . *Oui*. My sees-tair well not pair-meet zat I be antroduce to you. So! I deescovair you 'ave li-keeng for workeeng class girls. Also zat to speak weez such girls, antroducsyons are not required. So, *voilà!* I scheme. Oh, M'sieur! to you I confess my sin; an' w'en you go away I weep again zat I 'ave been so bad!

. . . Ah, I weeshed zees to be ze adventure extraordinaire. I 'ear 'ow all zees girls are fascinated by M'sieur. Zat you air zee grande gal-lant! Zen eet ees zat a da-reeng idea comes to me. Me! ze leetle French girl 'oo 'as nevair been keesed! Oh, oh!

I dream firs' of ze *tête-à-tête*. At a restaurant w'ere we dance dream-ilee togezair. Al-so I dream of moonlight rides weez you, an' a car paused ondair ze moonlight moon. Ah, M'sieur! An' zat ees not all.

I plan al-so a da-reeng veezeet to your apartment. An' you, you ofair me a cock-tail! . . . *Oui!* An' more! We seet on zee divan—so. An' soft museek, eet plays. An zen, an' zen you make lo— Oh, oh! w'at weekedness a truly innocent girl can dream of!

An' now you go? Weezout seenking too badly of my 'orreeble andescresyon?

M'sieur, M'sieur eez laugheeng? Oh, oh! One 'oo 'as leaved so long should know zat such laughtair wounds! M'sieur do I eempress you as being *l'enfant*?

(*Marie now discovers the glowering young man in swim trunks who has been hanging about.*)

M'sieur Carvair, you mus' go at once. Zat young man weeshes to speak weez me. . . .

W'at? I? No, I am not an oncor-reegable flairt! Oh, please to go away . . . No, no, I deed not tell ze young man zat I am gover-ness, no! But—eef 'e cshooes to zeenk so, well—

. . . No, I do not flairt weez heem. Oh, yes, once I do flairt—weez an ol-dair man like yourself. To try myself out, you ondair-stand. But weez zees yongair man, *non!* Decidedly no! I be a good girl again. Weez heem I am content to be—w'at 'e calls—pals.

(*There is such innocent, delightful catch in Marie's voice as she concludes*):

But, oh, M'sieur Carvair! Weez one so young, eet ees ze sweetest seeng in ze world to be—pals!

## GEMUTLICHKEIT

(Toward the grocery store of Friederich Breitenbusch a small group of men move doggedly. Friederich's usually pleasant features are twisted—partly sad, partly scowling. Satisfied that the party is coming into his store, he calls decisively to his wife)

Anna! Anna you vill nodd come into de shtore unless I zend. You hear? . . . Vy? Pecause along comes August Shtrauss und de town counzil mempers, dot's vy.

Hmm! So soon as I tell you not to, you come anyway. You bedder learn to opey—Anna! you see? August prings hiss sohn Vilhelm! . . . So vot, so vot! It makes me zig dot you make such common taugk. Don't you zee vot dat kind holdts in his handt? A doll, a soldcher doll like our Fritz—Ach! get away insidt pefore dey come in!

*(As the men enter, Friederich's expression becomes sarcastic and challenging.)*

Vell goodt beople, kent you say zum ding? . . . Gooten morgen to all. Dis ist de fierst time I haff de bleasure of seeingk you in mine shtore since de funeral. You vill miss de hearty greetink from Uncle Hans, but I do mine pest. Vot is your bleasure? Some groceries? Some fruit? De fruit I do not advise. Some iss oldt—zome vas broughdt by Uncle Hans pefore dot unfortunate acci— . . .

Insoolt you, August? Moost pe you haff guilty conzhuns. No, no, August, should I vish to pe insoolting I shpeak of mine deadt poy; mine Fritz—not so, chentlemen? Vot, den, iss your bleasure iff nodd to puy?

. . . Yah, Uncle Hans' landt nex to de pigknic park iss now mine; idt is so . . . You heerdt dot I bropose to build me a fence alongk dot landt? . . . Vell, vy does anypody build fences, chentlemen? To keep beople from insidte . . . So? If de kinder cannodd bathe in de crick pecause of mine fence, too pad. I do nodd know vy I should care. I no longer haff son. As my vife, Anna, say: So vot?

. . . Dogk in de manger? Me? Chentlemen, do nodd ledt your vards pecome harsh. If you haff someding to bropose, shpeagk soft. Mine temper is nodd goodt dese days!

. . . I should nodd build de fence? Vell, I—

*(The child toddles forward.)*

Ach, Vilhelm, you like de doll? . . . Yah, I see. It is solcher doll . . . Yah, idt is vun like I gieb mine Fritz . . . Fritz? He is——

Chentlemen, you hear de boobily? Veere iss Fritz? he asks. You know! You sendt him dere! You sendt him dere alongk mit mine Uncle Hans! Loogk pehindt you, chentlemen, oudt de door to de streedt! For five years—ever zince mine Fritz is porn—I ask you for a traffic lide. But pecause you decided to pe shtiff-knecked, de lide vos neffer pudt in. You knew idt needed dot lide but you vos too shtiff-knecked! Und Vy? You ver madt pecause Uncle Hans didn't make geeft of his landt for schwimming pool next to de pigknic blace. Perhaps Uncle Hans vas schtiff-necked too. He vouldt nodd gieb de landt undtil you pudt in de traffigk lide. So vot happens?

Up de hill a car roars! Gott! I vas afraidt mostly fer de customers—neffer didt I t'ink von of us vould pe killed! Budt mine kliner Fritz, mine Uncle Hans—dey vas de victims, chentlemen—through shtiff-kneckedness! Undt now you come to me for a fabor!

Vell I grandt idt.

You pe surbrizedt? Ah, budt vodd gedts idt to pe shtubborn. I vait to tell you I make gift of dot landt, I vait to haff you come to me und ask. Vy? To humple you? Not qvite. Idt iss pecause I vish us all to learn a lesson. Edt iss so easy to be shtubborn. In Chermanny I see too much of dot. So ven I come here I say I make idt differendt. Y' know, my wife Anna, she taugks American slang vich I do nodd like too much. But von ting she says dot I do like. Dis iss idt, chentlemen: Gieb to de odder guy a break!

HOOOT, MRS. TAVISH!

(Not a spark of guile lurks in the animated face of Maggie Tavish as she glances about the wealthy Laird's manse parlor; and if she feels envy toward the elegant horsehair upholstery, the solid, dignified furnishings or the chromos or heavy wood paneling, none of it shows as she rises eagerly to greet the Laird.)

Come noo, David MacGregor, dinna look sa startled at sight o' an ould friend. You think I be ower brawly to be adventurin' inta yer hame—it's sa mony years since last I cam? Pairhops. Ah! but

Davy I hae ower muckle o' trouble! T'was wi' hope ye might een comfairt wi' advice that I cam.

Ocht, Davy, who'd hae thocht—when we pairted that nicht—that thirty year would pass ere I 'gin put foot intac yer hoose. Ye be na langer angry wi' me that I dinna say aye when ye pressed me tae wed? Good, I'm glad ye dinna feel bad.

An' yet, tis strang' Davy, ower strang', hoo proud ye were. Ye never even asked why I refused ye.

Thirty year! Today ye hae wife i' the grave an' a dochter grown to woman!

But I'm not wishfu' to hairt wi' memories. David, 'tis me ain bairn aboot which I come. Donald, as warks th' noo in yer shop. O' course he doesn' ken I cam, and the Deil forfend he should find out! But, tell me, David, the bairn is a guide woorker? . . . Sa? Ye value a lad sa versatile wi' talent? . . . Aye? Then ha' schoolin' paid!

Ye kan, he hae said tae me: "In short thrift, Mither, shall I prove tae the Laird that I be th' best mon at weavin' an' designin' in th' whole o' his mill!" He said tha' tae me, Davy an' he said: "In short thrift sha' I prove equal tae run the Laird's whole enterprise! And soon wi' he need me—wha' wi' him see puir in health!"

*(Maggie's guilelessness becomes still more innocent.)*

Wha' David, yer suspicious o' me? T'is the lad's ain worrds. I on'y mention sic wi' a Mither's pride. Should the bairn *fail t'* win yer Ower-seership wi' his skill an' meerit—Weel, ye were easy tae get aroun' in yer youth, David, but wha' boots that noo?

. . . Weel, th' bairn hae become restless. He isna wishfu' tae bide wi' me lang—pairhops na langer than Spring. Then he threateans tae take the siller he hae saved and gae to America.

. . . N-o-o-o, he hasna exactly pronounced himsel' as dissatisfied. Though, pairhops, if a promise o' advancement wad be made, he—Ah, but no need tae prate o' that. Davy, here is Donald, the bubbliest bubbly-jock o' the kail-yard! Think o' th' bairn in America bein' speired at by extravagant lassies! Oh, if he bring trouble back tae the hame in the shape o' a floutin' wife!

Ah, Davy, I could'na hope that fer ould lang syne ye'd pairmit Donald tae pay court tae yer dochter—*(hurriedly)*—though it is een true that they like each ither rale weel, an'—

Och, Davy! yer surely not suspicious o' Maggie Tavish? Tis the bairns themsel's that ken hoo they feel tae each other. And

Donald be far too honorable tae woo yer dochter wi'oot yer consent . . . O' course he wadna!

Davy, yer lookin' thochtfu'! Ye'll suggest a way? Fer ould lang syne? If in America, Donald should lairn tae lift the glass! His fayther, while he lived, dinna hesitate tae lift a glass wi' the best o' 'em—and if the bairn should ape his ways awa' frae hame! Och, Davy! Davy!

*(The harrassed Laid wants to think it over.)*

Eh? Think matters ower? Really? But, Davy, hoot noo! Ye ken what yer sayin'? Thinkin' a matter ower—Davy, that's a Scotsman's way o' consent! . . .

Ye mean sic? Yer word on 't?

*(Maggie fixes him with a half-tender glance.)*

Ye hae gie'd yer word, ye'll na back oot noo! But ye ken the promise means Donald wi' hae pairmission tae woo yer bonnie dochter and be future Ower-seer o' the mill? . . . Och, but in yer hairt ye ken yer judgment's true—or ye wadna say aye sa fast. Still, yer the same ould Davy I refused. Are ye wishfu' noo to ken why I rejected yer proposal fer tha' o' a puirer mon? Weel, I'm a wheedler, Davy. Always hae I wheedled, tis pairt o' me. But, Davy, I couldna quite stand marriage wi' a mon sa easy tae wheedle, dear friend, as yersel'!

## COMEDIE ITALIANA

(Umberto Belami, young Italian, has been asked to call at the palatial home of Mrs Quentin Randolph, member of New Orleans society. He follows the butler into Mrs Randolph's presence, hat in hand and smiling to overcome his shyness.)

Gooda morneeng, Signora Randolpho . . . Yes, as deesa gentleman say, I am Umberto Belami, seenger. . . . Geeva to 'eem my 'at? To keep? . . . Please, Signora, eef you nota mind, I keepa 'eem weeth me so I nota forgat 'eem.

. . . Si, I seenga een *L' Café de Naple*. T'ree year I seenga dere. Si, de Signora say een 'er letter dat she 'ear me seenga dere. De Signora ees eentrested een me an' weesha to 'elp me study? Eet ees mosta kin'. I nota understan' w'y you do dees for me.

. . . Gracias. I seenga at Church too . . . Educash? Nota so good, Signora. I go to school a few years, den I beegen to seeng.

Aftera dat I get a steady jaub . . . Een dees ceety I leeve maybe eighta years. Before dat I leeve een Napoli weetha my Aunt unteel mia Padre send money to breenga me. Een Italia I stay, you see. No, I confessa heem—my educash, he ees nota so good. Ah! but, Signora, eet ees nota weet de brains dat one seengs, but weet de 'eart an' throat.

. . . Ahskoosa? Madre mia! you woulda send me to New York to study woice? Me? Umberto Belami, a café seenger? Mia padre an' madre weel be speechless! Signora Randolpho, you are maganeefeescent! But pleasa no beat em up debush! Joosta w'at I gotta do for you, huh?

. . . Notheeng! Now I nota understan' atall! You wanta no parta the money I make? Leetle blessed Madre, thees cannotta be true! W'en you weesha me to, to—?

. . . I go whenever I am ready? Ah, I talla madre an' padre soon as I go home! I be ready rahtd way! I—Signora, thees kind of theeng, eet do nota joosta 'appen. Dere mus' be de catch. W'eres d' fesh hook? . . . None? You meana dees?

. . . Yeah, si . . . oh, educash? Study educash? . . . W'atta you mean? . . . Geta de poleesh? Be gooda speaker? 'ave planta good talk? Bot, Signora, no! Then I become smarta man! . . . Oh, no, Signora, I no weesh to be smarta or wise guy. I justa no wanta be smart, thata be all.

. . . I know, but eef I gotta do lika you say—I nota wanta go. I nota study seenging, but stay 'ome an' be dumb—joosta lika my family.

. . . I do nota theenk you understan'. You nota know Italians, Signora Randolpho, or you nota even speak of dees in de first place. Anyway I try to tella you.

You know what eet means: *patria potestas*? . . . No? Well, lasta week I hear a guy say dem words. Eet 'as to do weeth family. Eet means somat'eeng about keepin' de family togedder, keepin' de home togedder.

You see, padrona mia? Eesa 'ard to make you onderstan'. Mebbe I batter nota try make you onderstan'. You are a forestiere—so stranga to our ways. . . . I try again, si.

We theenk all America musta be always *tirare avanti* how I say? "get on." Weet us, nota so. Many Italians, yes. A Genoese or an Italian from Liguria—they too weesh to geta on. We from around Napoli, nota so much. Now taka me. I nota become greata

seenger, thata I know. So w'y I spoil myself weeth educash? I come back, I be on'appy weeth my people. I be preeta good second rate seenger. I nota feet een at de top of de heap weeth real artistes, nor would I be satisfied weetha my family.

Padrona mia, lata me go. I do nota weesh to take advantage of you, theesa way I keep 'appy. I nota geta too smarta for my madre an' padre. Gracias, Signora, gracias, bella mia anima—my soul ees yours! Buta my body—ah, dat I keep outa New Yorka—dat I keep een New Orleans weeth my family.

### GAELIC MOTHER-TOUCH

(The hour of sunset, the hour when many souls pass to the silence beyond. Warned by premonition, a poorly dressed woman stands outside Room 106 of City Hospital. She cannot conceal a nervousness and a tension in her shoulders. From the sick room steps Dr. Michael)

Sweet Doctor Michael! Kin I see me little darlin', doctor? I've brang her a bit o' broth. How is she? . . . Unchanged is it? Doctor Moike, yer always tellin' me and me ould man d-that. Doctor Moike—today I felt—! Well could she be havin' this bit o' broth? . . . But pwhat does the poor child eat, if she cannot be takin' even this wee sup?

Doctor Moike, ye've got t' let me inta her! Well I know ye've said not until afther the operation, but look— For two days ye've been awithholdin' th' knoife. Now wouldn't th' razin be d-that she's not procurin' stringth? . . . Sure it took no broight moind t' figure d-that wan out. I had a feelin'. Doctor Moike, be lookin' me in th' oye. Wan Oirishman to another, ye've doubts she'll make it?

*(She utters a stifled cry.)*

No, no, make no denial! I see it written on th' sensitive face of you. Ah, ye've got t' let me in t' see th' darlin', even should you forbid me t' say a word! See now, am I lookin' t' be loike a mother that would harm her own? Fall t' pieces and bog down and cry? Please, Doctor Moike, I swear me ivery touch will be loike dew kissed flowers and all me voice and all me words will be loike th' soothinest midicine! Whist, doctor! I feel I have th' secind soight. It brought me here in spite o' mesilf. I know d-that what I do will be roight!

. . . Sure yer a saint, God bliss you! . . . No, av course I won't

shtay long. And I'll breathe like a kitten and say niver a word in there. Doctor, a million thanks t' yer gintle heart d-that denies not a Mither's love!

*(In an instant she has swept into the room.)*

Mary, mavourneen, me own! It's yer Mither, angel. Open yer dear, tired oyes and let me see thim agin. Ah, sweet—God be praised—it's good t' see d-thim agin!

Yer not to move, darlin', or spake or aven blink at me. That black-hearted rascal of a doctor'll be back in jig toime and if he hears me, he'll have me wig fer as much as talkin' to you! Comfortable in yer white bed, darlin'?

An well you moight be, ye dear imp, wid nothin' more t' do but pick up a bit o' stringth fer a tiny operation. Faith, ye could well afford t' feel a bit o' shame! You, a foine, strappin' girl o' tin—layin' here so illigantly at her ease! In spite av which, th' doctor tills me yer not doin' as handsome as ye should. Pfaugh! Is this me own that's so down-face for scarce no razin atall?

*(This technique fails. The mother is quick to try something else.)*

Darlin', Divil take me fer talkin' to me own like that. Listen, ye remimber that odd fancy of yours ye once told me of? Is it because yer fancy is beaten that ye don't lind yer strinth to gittin' well? Ah, wirrah!

Whist, now. Remimber I told ye of me home in the old down country? A thatched cottage it was, in the hill soid? With us foriver chasin' the goats off th' thatched roof so's they'd not chew it up and cause leaks? T'was far from a place of a place, Mary darlin', but it was home. And were I as ill as th' loikes av you, would I be the sort t' refuse to git better so as not to have to go back to it? Thin, no more should ye feel as ye do to our home now!

*(The mystic in the mother rises.)*

Darlin', I'm rachin' out to th' hot hand of ye. D'ye feel th' strinth aflowin' from me inta yer body? Mary, angel, can ye not spot the bit av woild ristlessness that's in yer mither too? I have it ever as much as you. Faith, it carried over from me to you mavourneen—for many's the noight in the ould counthry that I listened to th' honk av the birds in the Fall av the year! Many's the toime I longed t'sprid me own wings and floy! Ah, but the only floyin' that life permitted me was inta the arms av Larry Shannon, yer very own father!

Mary, yer Mither's an ignoramous. She's not had the education to make a big loife av her own. Not that I'm complainin. No, fer I have me plans fer you! Angel, come back to us and I swear by the Irish heart that's in me and that longs to sing—I swear the heart of you will not be so caged! Mavourneen, my own, come back! Ye must floy fer us both—and you will! I see by th' tears glistenin' in yer oye! Come back, and taste loife fer me and floy—Sh! It's Doctor Moike.

. . . Yis, doctor, I'll lave at once. I've jist been asettin' here aholdin' her hand . . . Indeed? Do you think so now? Thin take her pulse, saints do!

Well? It's stronger? Well what would you make av d-that! Her pulse is stronger . . . Whoy I didn't do a thing, Doctor Moike. Whoy I no more than sat here quiet as a mouse—as I after promised . . . Well fer pity's sakes! On th' mend? I'll be floying! With d-that news t' buoy me up, I'll be floyin' fer fair! But as to what could put the choild on th' mend—savin' me bare prisence—well, a miracle av grace is the only axplanation!

#### RULE BRITANNIA

(Cedric Ralston is mountain climbing with his American fiancée, Beatrice, her sister Ethel and some others. These three have lost sight of the faster members. Cedric is scrambling up to join Ethel, the soon to be sister-in-law, who has just screamed to him)

I, I say—Beatrice has fallen over the side, hasn't she? . . . No offence, Ethel; the question's rhetorical. Mmm. A stiffish sort of spot she's in. I say—! Do you notice? She isn't moving! I'll give odds she's unconscious. (*Winningly over the side.*) Beatrice, Bee—speak to the old man, won't you? There's a jolly deah. Jove, not a word . . . Do something? An' the gel my feeawnnee? Of course I shall. But, ah—you do it. You, ah, do a bit of screaming, eh? That would do capitally. . . . Come, come Ethel; there are experienced mountain men in the party ahead; they'll hear you and get Bee out of this in a jiff. Scream . . . Oh, come; all good girls can scream; that's how one knows they're good—girls.

(*Ethel decides to scream.*)

(*Cedric peers again.*) Oh, Bee! Lucky, Ethel, she's lodged against that boulder. I'll keep an eye. If she wakes up she might

dislodge herself and . . . I, timid? But don't we need a bit of caution? If Bee had just looked before she leaped— Oh, oh, see there! Isn't that Fischer, the guide? (*Tries screaming.*) Oh, Fischeh! I say, he hears me!

(*Beatrice stirs.*) Oh, I say, Bee; don't move. You've fallen . . . Yes, you've—Quiet Ethel, please. (*To Bee.*) I say you've fallen. Now lie quiet like a good egg and you won't get all scrambled. That's a sweet old dear.

(*The guide and party approach.*)

Fischer, we're in a devil of a mess heah . . . Oh, you see that, do you? Well how are we to get my feeawncee up, eh? . . . Ethel, don't be hysterical; think of, of Joan of Arc, Carrie Nation. Well, what do you think, guide? . . . Eh? Haw! She should have looked before she— Haw, do you hear that Ethel? I . . . Ethel! Ethel you're right. Do you hear that, guide? What are we going to do about it? We've jolly well got to do something you know.

. . . But I say, that sounds silly . . . Of course I apprehend there's danger in our attempting a rescue at once; but there must be something one can do? I did think you'd be the chappie who'd know what that something was . . .

. . . What? . . . Go— Tut, tut—go around and reach her through the valley? That would take hours and hours—even if we flew back here again in an airplane. Look. Look here—come here. Would this do the trick?

(*Cedric leads the guide to a lower part of the trail.*)

Now couldn't we lower a man from this point and swing him pendulum fashion (*Imitating with motion of his body*) and then, when he got enough momentum, he could swing over to the point where Miss Graham is, eh? In that way we shouldn't start the landslide you're worried about.

. . . What do you mean "too dangerous?" It could be done, couldn't it? . . . Yes? Then I'll try it.

. . . Of course I will Ethel. You have your rope, Guide? . . . Eh, Ethel? . . . It's a pip. I'm merely reversing American psychology. You chaps are often too courageous to look before you leap. We chaps— Well, after we've looked, we don't so much mind leaping. Well (*Moving up trail*), carry on, pip-pip, Rule Britannia!



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